

WEALTH FOR THE WORKING CLASS: THE CLEAN ENERGY ECONOMY

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INNOVATION,
ENTREPRENEURSHIP,
AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

UNITED STATES

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD
JULY 27, 2021



Small Business Committee Document Number 117-028
Available via the GPO Website: www.govinfo.gov

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

WASHINGTON : 2021

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ, New York, *Chairwoman*
JARED GOLDEN, Maine
JASON CROW, Colorado
SHARICE DAVIDS, Kansas
KWEISI MFUME, Maryland
DEAN PHILLIPS, Minnesota
MARIE NEWMAN, Illinois
CAROLYN BOURDEAUX, Georgia
TROY CARTER, Louisiana
JUDY CHU, California
DWIGHT EVANS, Pennsylvania
ANTONIO DELGADO, New York
CHRISSY HOULAHAN, Pennsylvania
ANDY KIM, New Jersey
ANGIE CRAIG, Minnesota
BLAINE LUETKEMEYER, Missouri, *Ranking Member*
ROGER WILLIAMS, Texas
JIM HAGEDORN, Minnesota
PETE STAUBER, Minnesota
DAN MEUSER, Pennsylvania
CLAUDIA TENNEY, New York
ANDREW GARBARINO, New York
YOUNG KIM, California
BETH VAN DUYNE, Texas
BYRON DONALDS, Florida
MARIA SALAZAR, Florida
SCOTT FITZGERALD, Wisconsin

MELISSA JUNG, *Majority Staff Director*
ELLEN HARRINGTON, *Majority Deputy Staff Director*
DAVID PLANNING, *Staff Director*

CONTENTS

OPENING STATEMENTS

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Hon. Jason Crow | Page 1 |
| Hon. Young Kim | 3 |

WITNESSES

| | |
|---|----|
| Ms. Leticia Colon De Mejias, Chief Executive Officer of Energy Efficiencies Solutions and Co-Chair for the Building Performance Association, Energy Efficiencies Solutions, Windsor, CT | 5 |
| Mr. James Hasselbeck, Director of Operations, ReVision Energy, Inc., South Portland, ME | 7 |
| Mr. Samuel Gilchrist, Western Campaigns Director, Natural Resources Defense Council, Denver, CO | 9 |
| Mr. Tom Greer, Proprietor and Owner, Hub City Brewing Co., Belen, NM, testifying on behalf of the Consumer Energy Alliance | 11 |

APPENDIX

| | |
|---|----|
| Prepared Statements: | |
| Ms. Leticia Colon De Mejias, Chief Executive Officer of Energy Efficiencies Solutions and Co-Chair for the Building Performance Association, Energy Efficiencies Solutions, Windsor, CT | 30 |
| Mr. James Hasselbeck, Director of Operations, ReVision Energy, Inc., South Portland, ME | 40 |
| Mr. Samuel Gilchrist, Western Campaigns Director, Natural Resources Defense Council, Denver, CO | 44 |
| Mr. Tom Greer, Proprietor and Owner, Hub City Brewing Co., Belen, NM, testifying on behalf of the Consumer Energy Alliance | 53 |
| Questions for the Record: | |
| None. | |
| Answers for the Record: | |
| None. | |
| Additional Material for the Record: | |
| ClearFlame Engine Technologies | 56 |

WEALTH FOR THE WORKING CLASS: THE CLEAN ENERGY ECONOMY

TUESDAY, JULY 27, 2021

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INNOVATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP,
AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:02 a.m., in Room 2360, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Jason Crow [chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Crow, Davids, Phillips, Newman, Bourdeaux, Luetkemeyer, Williams, Tenney, Garbarino, and Young Kim.

Chairman CROW. Good morning. I call this hearing to order. Without objection, the Chair is authorized to declare a recess at any time.

Let me begin by saying that standing House and committee rules and practice will continue to apply during hybrid proceedings. All members are reminded that they are expected to adhere to these standing rules, including decorum.

House regulations require members to be visible through our video connection throughout the proceedings, so please keep your cameras on. Also, please remember to remain muted until you are recognized to minimize background noise. If you have to participate in another proceeding, please exit this one and log back in later.

In the event a member encounters technical issues that prevent them from being recognized for their questioning, I will move to the next available member of the same party and will recognize that member at the next appropriate time slot provided they have returned to the proceeding.

Those members and staff physically present in the committee room today, we will continue to follow the most recent OAP guidance. Masks are no longer required in our meeting space for members and staff who have been fully vaccinated. All members and staff who have not been fully vaccinated are still required to wear masks and socially distance.

In the first half of 2020, extreme weather events rocked the United States and countries worldwide. Historic winter storms in Texas, raging wildfires in Oregon, and unprecedented floods in Michigan remind us of the imminent danger that climate change poses regardless of location.

Just last week Secretary Holland was in my home State of Colorado meeting with local leaders about the worsening drought and

wildfire conditions. These extreme weather events in the U.S. are mirrored by similar episodes across the globe. This wealth of evidence makes it abundantly clear that a climate crisis is a threat to human lives and to economic prosperity. That is why we must act now to protect our planet and create a more sustainable economy.

Developing the clean energy economy won't be a small task and comes with its fair share of challenges. At the same time we must understand the many benefits that going green can deliver to small businesses and the American economy.

For businesses relying on renewable power generation or increased energy efficiency can lead to lower costs and consumption and ultimately a higher bottom line. By increasing investment in renewables on a macro basis we can transform the U.S. into a global leader in clean energy, reducing our dependence on foreign nations.

Going green also has the potential to reinvigorate the labor market by creating millions of good paying jobs spread across tens of thousands of businesses. In fact, across the country, we already see the ways that clean energy can benefit our economy.

Clean energy firms account for roughly 35,000 businesses across the country and employ over 3 million workers. Small businesses dominate the clean energy sectors, with nearly 90 percent of businesses employing fewer than 100 employees and nearly a third of those with fewer than five.

These jobs also pay well with medium hourly wages 25 percent higher than the national average, and they tend to hire local workers as well. Yet these small firms often lack access to capital necessary to expand their operations and meet the clean energy demand. That is why I am planning on introducing the House companion version of the 504 Green Energy Enhancement Act which would increase 504 loan amounts for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects.

With fighting the climate crisis being one of the top priorities for the President and the 117th Congress, the clean energy economy will likely continue to grow and create more better paying jobs for the American people. Unfortunately, if Americans don't have the requisite skills to fill jobs in the clean energy economy, they won't experience these benefits. Many firms in the sector already report difficulty finding workers. Without adequate investment in workforce development to ensure qualified workers are available, we run the risk of grounding the clean energy economy before it has a chance to take off. This would have profound consequences for the health of our economy and our decarbonization goals, so it is vital that Congress works to ensure workers have the skills and credentials needed to fill these roles.

Today's hearing will allow us to explore different types of workforce development initiatives and what Congress can do to facilitate their implementation.

With that, I want to thank all of our witnesses for being here today, and I look forward to our conversation.

I would now like to yield to the Ranking Member, Mrs. Young Kim, for her opening statement.

Mrs. YOUNG KIM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. And I also want to welcome and thank the members for participating in person or joining us via Zoom today.

Prior to the pandemic and under the previous administration's pro growth and deregulatory agenda, an extraordinary 160 million Americans were employed, and the unemployment rate fell to a 50-year low. Additionally, wages for rank and file workers and non-supervisory employees were rising faster than the wages for managers or supervisors. Now 3.2 million Americans are unemployed, all while small businesses place help wanted signs on their storefronts and struggle to find the labor force to meet heightened demand.

As we safely reopen our communities and transition to recovery, I hope we can continue to work together to help small businesses stay afloat while also supporting American workers.

Despite the tremendous amount of financial relief flowing to small businesses, many continue to endure a challenging recovery. Since January of this year, inflation has increased every single month and is climbing at the fastest rate in 13 years. We cannot continue the current path of reckless spending which in turn is becoming a tax on America's workers, middle class families, and small businesses.

In May, roughly half of small businesses, 48 percent, were forced to raise their prices. This is the largest percentage reported in 40 years. Small businesses and workers are particularly vulnerable to changes in the price of fuel, food, and materials, and now they are simultaneously experiencing a decrease worth of their paychecks.

To pay for this administration's spending plans, the President has proposed various tax increases that will impact small businesses and workers. Within the American Jobs Plan, which focuses on items, including the Green New Deals, climate change initiatives, the President is proposing to pay for the spending by increasing the corporate tax rate from 21 percent to 28 percent. This will impact over a million small businesses organized as C corporations. I think it is worth noting that 55 percent of subchapter C corporations have five or fewer employees and 85 percent have fewer than 20 employees. So among the outsized effects, a corporate tax increase will directly cause utility costs to surge across the country and, as a result, millions of small businesses will face higher electric, gas, and water bills.

The Biden administration has paired government spending with government regulations that further hinder America's small business recovery. The costs of regulatory compliance is disproportionately burdensome for small businesses who operate on thin margins with less staff and tight budgets. We should empower small businesses to innovate, not add the additional costs of regulatory compliance to their balance sheet.

I believe we can return to the booming economy we had before the pandemic, but any efforts to increase regulations and impose additional requirements on small businesses will further hinder recovery and jeopardize the state of our nation's smallest firms.

Small businesses have the flexibility, the agility, and the creativity to overcome anything. But, Congress, we need to allow them

to do that by continuing to provide pro growth, pro business policies.

So I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today and let's discuss on how we can support them and work across the nation.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman CROW. Thank you, Mrs. Young Kim. The gentleman yields back.

I would like to take a moment to explain how this hearing will proceed. Each witness will have 5 minutes to provide a statement, and each committee member will have 5 minutes for questions. Please ensure that your microphone is on when you begin speaking and that you return to mute when you are finished.

With that, I would like to introduce our witnesses.

Our first witness is Ms. Leticia Colon De Mejias—am I pronouncing that right, Ms. Mejias—the founder and CEO of Energy Efficiencies Solutions, a Connecticut based full service energy conservation company. EES provides comprehensive energy efficiency services, like home energy assessments and energy education.

Ms. Mejias cofounded Green Echo Warriors, a nonprofit youth ecology and conservation group. She is also a longtime workforce development expert, having developed and coordinated ESL and adult-based education courses for the staff at Hartford Hospital and created the Your Education Success Foundation to support adult learners who desire to return to school.

Welcome, Ms. Colon De Mejias. We look forward to your testimony.

Our next witness is Mr. James Hasselbeck, the director of operations at ReVision Energy, a solar installation company in Portland, Maine. He has been involved in the development, engineering, and construction of public and private renewable energy projects since 2006.

After joining ReVision Energy in 2012, he became director of operations for all three locations in Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. He is also board member of The amicus Solar Cooperative.

Welcome, Mr. Hasselbeck.

Our third witness is Mr. Sam Gilchrist, the western campaigns director for the National Resources Defense Council where he focuses on State and local policies to ensure a just transition for Colorado's energy workers. Before joining NRDC, he worked as the executive director of Colorado's AFL-CIO and now resides in my district in Colorado.

Thank you—actually I will go back. I skipped a page.

Welcome, Mr. Gilchrist.

I will now yield to the Ranking Member, Mrs. Young Kim, to introduce our final witness.

Mrs. YOUNG KIM. Thank you, Chairman.

It is a pleasure to introduce our first witness, Mr. Tom Greer. He is an owner and proprietor of Hub City Brewing Company. He is here on behalf of the Consumer Energy Alliance. Mr. Greer currently resides in Belen, New Mexico.

In 2013, Mr. Greer opened Hub City Brewing Company at the Belen Rail Runner Station in the heart of downtown to support local tourism and economic development. Many have referred to

Hub City Brewing Company as Belen's Cheers. This is a community gathering place where everyone knows your name.

Prior to Hub City Brewing Pub, Mr. Greer had an extensive career in television and marketing and held numerous leadership roles, including president of the board of directors of the Greater Belen Chamber of Commerce, also serving as Vice President of the Belen Main Street Partnership, and New Mexico State director of the Concerned Veterans for America.

Mr. Greer is passionate about revitalizing the economy and ensuring prosperity for all communities, including rural areas. His entrepreneur background and dedication to economic development will be extremely beneficial to our hearing today.

So thank you, Mr. Greer, for taking time to testify and share your experience with us today.

Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman CROW. Thank you very much. The gentlewoman yields back.

Ms. Colon De Mejias, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENTS OF LETICIA COLON DE MEJIAS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF ENERGY EFFICIENCIES SOLUTIONS AND CO-CHAIR FOR THE BUILDING PERFORMANCE ASSOCIATION, ENERGY EFFICIENCIES SOLUTIONS, WINDSOR, CT; JAMES HASSELBECK, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, REVISION ENERGY, INC., SOUTH PORTLAND, ME; SAMUEL GILCHRIST, WESTERN CAMPAIGNS DIRECTOR, NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL, DENVER, CO; AND TOM GREER, PROPRIETOR AND OWNER, HUB CITY BREWING CO., BELEN, NM, TESTIFYING ON BEHALF OF THE CONSUMER ENERGY ALLIANCE

STATEMENT OF LETICIA COLON DE MEJIAS

Ms. COLON DE MEJIAS. Thank you, Honorable Chairman Crow and Ranking Member for the opportunity to be here today with you. It is so important that small businesses be allowed a space at the table as you work to lift our nation, people, and our economy.

I am Leticia Colon De Mejias. I am the owner of Energy Efficiencies Solutions, President of the Building Performance Association policy Co-Chair, and Chair of Equity and Opportunity for Latino Affairs in the State of Connecticut Commission on Equity and Opportunity, and board member for the initiative board. But, more importantly, I employ 27 people in energy efficiency careers. Twenty-three of them are minorities and people of color, ten are women in leadership roles, and all are earning between \$32,000 and \$75,000 annually, with the potential of an increased \$100,000 a years with sales commission.

I have helped four other people start companies just like my own that are now owned by minorities and women, and I left my career in healthcare and workforce for 16 years to start this business after seeing a film called "Kilowatt Hours" that informed me on the climate and energy crisis which is polluting the world we live in today. As a mother and grandmother, I felt compelled to leave the industry I work in and start this energy efficiency job to open op-

opportunities for people in my community to find better sources of employment with higher rates of pay and more flexible schedules.

I leveraged my good credit to purchase tools and get certified in the demand reduction field to both literally and figuratively close gaps in my community, estate, and our energy bills. My first year yielded about \$150,000, which was more than I made at the hospital, and my second year I began to struggle to find qualified workers. That is the struggle that I am dealing with today. It is the thing that ails my industry overall because, despite these careers being viable and accessible and offering excellent pay in benefits, we are not finding Americans who want to work or have the skills needed to work in these careers.

What we need is more Federal support directly to help small businesses afford the costs of training and reskilling our current employees because our technology has continued to change rapidly daily to meet the consumer market demands and Federal law changes. We need to have resources and take intentional steps to close the workforce disparities as they relate specifically to people of color, women, minorities, and underrepresented populations that have been historically left behind, for so many Americans are unaware there is growing opportunities in energy efficiency and the clean energy economy. And how can someone be prepared for something that they don't even know exists? Unfortunately, we have not put enough emphasis or resources behind science and public schools, and we have done very little to communicate broadly on the benefits of social skills and soft skills as they relate to critical workforce success.

We also have not invested in simplifying our workforce programs to help career transitions or get Americans back to work in these careers which they are ready for Americans to be hired in today.

As a person of action, EES has a motto, "We are here to help." And when we see a gap or a crack, we seek to fill that gap aptly, and so we use our Ts, time, talent, tenacity, and teamwork to solve problems together, and we have served over 14,000 households and over 10 million square feet of multifamily housing to draw down up to 30 percent of that building's energy demand, allowing them to use that money for their families, businesses, education, or healthcare, drawing down demands for energy and pollution at the same time and employing our communities as we go because if you have buildings with a B, we have careers for you.

We can drive down the cost of energy and drive up the access to renewable resources, and we help our staff buy cars, homes, and live the American dream. And as I said, finding workers is the most difficult part. And I suggest that we push forward with robust investments in programs which offer direct supports to small businesses. An example of this is the Blue Collar to Green Collar Jobs Act which seeks to offer short-term training programs and equip Americans with the skills to fill the jobs and earn higher wages right now.

We need to give priority to companies who hire minorities, veterans, and women and help them transition people from the fossil fuel industry into clean energy careers by leveraging the skill sets they have already.

And Congress can support robust efficiency rebates to help Americans lower their bills and demands all the while increasing local job opportunities because, frankly speaking, efficiency overlooked is just efficient.

We must ensure that these activities support the workforce development that are accessible to small businesses and include flexibility and use of funds for on-the-job training programs because there is no Department of Labor code for energy efficiency, making it very difficult for us to access apprenticeship programs, particularly in the residential sector, and this is a major barrier to our work expansion or growth depth. The Department of Energy has an understanding of this industry, and there needs to be supports for residential business. It is usual. We need ensure more leaders and Federal staff and departments understand the value of efficiency as a drawdown to close gaps in bills and health in our climate crisis and to provide stability for our clean energy economy and success for all Americans.

At Efficiency for All, we are currently conducting a 12-week program to train individuals on all of the certified skills needed, as well as soft skills so they may get jobs immediately in the Energize Connecticut Program, and this program connects them directly to on-the-job training and a 6-week training internship.

In conclusion, it is time that we diversify our clean energy workforce. Most of my staff came from at-risk populations and they were underserved, but that did not hold us back. We have continued to grow, all the while supporting the communities we came from because we know our work helps everyone. And the sooner we educate our communities on how to draw down energy demands and ramp up clean energy resources, the better off we will all be.

As a proud American and small business owner, I know that together we can create a responsible path forward to ensure inclusive transitions to clean, resilient, stable clean energy economy which could benefit all Americans regardless of economic or social standing.

Thank you.

Chairman CROW. Thank you, Ms. Colon De Mejias. And I will remind all witnesses to please stick with the 5-minute time limit. I appreciate your testimony.

Mr. Hasselbeck, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF JAMES HASSELBECK

Mr. HASSELBECK. Chairman Crow, Ranking Member Young Kim, and members of this committee. My name is James Hasselbeck, and I am director of operations of ReVision Energy, a renewable contracting company in northern New England. I am grateful for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of my 300 employee owners.

My goal today is to illustrate how ReVision Energy is disrupting traditional business norms as we confront the rampant climate damage resulting from 8 billion people burning fossil fuels. At the same time, we are trying to alleviate the social injustices and inequities historically inflicted on our by bot communities.

The sheer scale of modernizing our national grid, electrifying transportation, and transitioning to beneficial electrification is

reminiscent of the public works projects that revitalized America after the Great Recession. The private sector is recognizing the economic opportunity and is investing hundreds of billions of dollars in this effort. This influx of capital, often catalyzed by early State government R&D support, has resulted in wind and solar becoming the most cost-effective electricity generation sources available today.

Lazard's most recent leveled cost of energy analysis objectively demonstrates solar and wind being the lowest cost source of power generation available. This analysis is proven by ongoing massive investments in renewables, with solar projects alone making up over 40 percent of power plants brought on line in 2020. This manufacturing capacity for batteries continues to expand and prices continue to fall. We are also seeing increased adoption of energy storage. This is evident in the rapid expansion of electric vehicles and associated low carbon transportation infrastructure.

My construction teams are thrilled at the idea of charging their power pools and laptops on a remote job site using battery from their F-150 Lightning of lugging a heavy generator around.

The technology works, the money is flowing, and the public and private interest and desire for renewables is expanding at a rapid base, so rapid that our collective barrier to increased adoption is increasingly less economic or technological but instead due to a lack of skilled labor. You cannot outsource clean energy project installations.

Our workforce today includes over 230,000 Americans at 10,000 small businesses in solar alone according to the Solar Energy Industries Association. This same workforce needs to expand to over 900,000 to achieve the ambitious but necessary clean electricity priorities President Biden has set for 2035.

The women and men on ReVision Energy's installation team are electricians, plumbers, and apprentices. They are supported by engineers, system designers, project managers, procurement and warehouse staff, sales reps, financing pros, and legal experts. Together we self-perform millions of dollars of construction work in New England with our in-house teams and work closely with our subcontractor partners to build many more megawatts of clean power.

This also creates millions of dollars in revenue and corresponding jobs for our many domestic suppliers and vendors, and as hard as we try, even with the support of our incredible allies, we cannot meet the demand for highly skilled tradeswomen and men.

In response to this workforce challenge, in 2018, we created the ReVision Energy Training Center and Electrical Apprentice Program. In partnership with State regulatory agencies and the Federal Department of Labor, this 4-year program helps our team achieve the on-the-job and classroom electrical training to provide each individual a trade license and the skills to secure a high standard of living for the balance of their careers.

Organized labor's focus on worker benefits, safety, and career training is an admirable and critically important part of any workforce development program. We highly value our historical partnership with the IBEW and especially our good friends at the local Ford plant who invited President Harris to their new facility in

April. However, we want to be abundantly clear in highlighting that there are additional methods to facilitate workforce development, safety, and worker benefits outside of conventional organized labor structures.

We think our 100 percent employee-owned certified B Corp. company structure shared by many of our Amicus Solar Cooperative partners provides an equally valuable platform for workers' rights and benefits. We encourage the committee to look for opportunities to provide funding and support to alternative workforce development initiatives, in addition to the important and well established union programs.

In 2015, ReVision Energy became a certified B Corp. B corporations are companies that make explicit our commitment to multi stakeholder capitalism. The impacts on those multiple stakeholder groups are annually reviewed and certified by the objective third-party B Labs to assure compliance and continuous improvement.

Our deep commitment to our workers, communities, and the planet earn ReVision Energy best for the world in the workers category recognition from B Labs this year.

Building on that, in 2017, the cofounders of ReVision Energy decided to sell the company to our employees through an employee stock ownership plan or ESOP—

Chairman CROW. Thank you, Mr. Hasselbeck. Unfortunately, your time has expired. We will have more opportunity during the Q&A for you to fully flesh that out.

Mr. HASSELBECK. Thank you.

Chairman CROW. Mr. Gilchrist, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF SAMUEL GILCHRIST

Mr. GILCHRIST. Thank you, Chairman Crow, thank you, Ranking Member Young Kim, for inviting me to testify today, as well as thank you to the distinguished members of the House Committee on Small Business.

My name is Sam Gilchrist, and I am the western campaigns director of the Natural Resources Defense Council. NRDC is an international nonprofit organization of scientists, lawyers, and environmental specialists dedicated to protecting public health and the environment.

As Chairman Crow stated, prior to joining NRDC, I served as the executive director of the Colorado AFL-CIO. There we represented over 130,000 workers, many of whom worked within the broader energy sector, including the coal and fossil fuel industries. Together we now work to develop policy solutions to ensure these workers and their communities have a future in the clean energy economy.

The climate crisis is affecting communities across this nation in terms of both our economic and physical health. The decline of coal is being accelerated by the urgent need for us to reorient our energy policies away from burning fossil fuels in favor of cleaner, cheaper renewable energy.

Communities largely dependent on coal for high-paying jobs and local tax revenue are facing uncertainty as market forces make it less economical to produce energy from fossil fuels. The closure of coal mines and power plants can be economically catastrophic and

socially disorienting. The trauma caused by shifting economics is long lasting and involves the entire community. We have seen this before in many places across the country, but we have not always been prepared to address the situation proactively. This leaves many communities behind as their industries shutter.

The bottom line is that the clean energy transition is happening, and there are many opportunities to create good jobs in the clean energy future, and clean energy jobs are good jobs. According to the Environmental Entrepreneurs E2 Clean Energy Jobs America 2021 report, the clean energy sector now employs more than 3 million individuals nationwide. Median hourly wages are roughly 25 percent higher than the national average. More than 2/3 of clean energy jobs are in energy efficiency, while the remainder are in renewable energy, engineering, smart buildings, HVAC, electric vehicles, clean fuels, et cetera.

These jobs are hyper local, and they really aren't just concentrated in major metropolitan areas. Nearly 400,000 workers, which is about 13 percent of the clean energy workforce, exists in rural regions. Most clean energy jobs are in small businesses. As was already mentioned, more than 60 percent are employed by companies with fewer than 20 employees and about 90 percent of companies with fewer than 100. And I think it needs to be reiterated that these are jobs that cannot be exported or outsourced to our foreign competitors.

To ensure a prosperous future for many small businesses and local economies, we must support these companies and incentivize them to create more clean energy jobs. In Colorado, we have created the Office of Just Transition to help determine this path forward. The office created an action plan that recognizes that to succeed in economic diversification, small business growth, tax revenue protection, and good jobs for workers, communities must design their own futures and have adequate lead time and resources to do so, and we are in the process currently of building that model.

Colorado's Governor Polis has called on the Federal administration to do three things to help workers in their communities through the transition to clean energy accounts: First, develop a national strategy for impacted fossil fuel workers; two, address local budget shortfalls due to the loss of property tax and other revenues; and, three, finance long-term State and local economic development resiliency and diversification.

The Clean Jobs Report outlines further steps that the federal government can take to grow jobs and drive investments in States which are further detailed in my written testimony.

Investing in clean energy is a win-win for our country. We can reduce emissions that impact our climate and negatively affect our health while also creating good jobs, jobs that are largely in small businesses. We need Federal action to ensure these investments benefit everyone.

The bottom line is there is no better time to make these investments than now as we slowly recover from the ongoing pandemic. The clean energy transition is happening. It is going to affect workers and communities across the country, and we need to develop a national strategy. The strategy should focus on worker support and

community-led solutions to create more diversified communities where small businesses can thrive.

Once again, thank you very much for this opportunity to testify. Chairman CROW. Thank you, Mr. Gilchrist.
Mr. Greer, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF TOM GREER

Mr. GREER. Thank you, and good morning.

My name is Tom Greer, and I am the owner of Hub City Brewing Company in the small rural town of Belen, New Mexico, 25 miles south of Albuquerque. I grew up in East Lansing, Michigan, and my family was typical in those times, 1950s through the 1970s of the American middle class, two kids, dad with a solid job, and a mom who was highly underrated as a homemaker.

I attended Michigan State University, began my career as a professor at Lansing Community College as the media Department curriculum coordinator during the economic recession of 1974 and 1975. I worked directly with hundreds of union blue collar auto workers, many of whom could only fall back on their veteran's education benefits and unemployment to keep their family afloat.

I moved to New York City to be a professor at Long Island University's Brooklyn Campus. My students were predominantly African American, and I will never forget them regularly walking me to the subway station after my night classes to make sure I got to the train safely.

I was recruited by J. Walter Thompson in 1980 at the time home shopping and new satellite delivered TV industry was launched and became vice president and director of new media development where my job was to introduce the JWT clients to new media opportunities. Since leaving JWT in 1982, I created and ran numerous television production and tourism-related businesses in New York, Colorado, Montana, and currently New Mexico.

We moved to Belen, New Mexico, in 2005. Climate, proximity to a large city, airport, interstate highway access, and the southern terminus of the new Rail Runner commuter train presented an exciting challenge, and we thought we could make a difference.

The Rail Cafe opened in 2007. Then housing collapse of 2008 hit Belen very hard. The cafe closed in 2008, but we kept the building. A booming microbrewing industry in New Mexico led to our opening Hub City Brewing in 2016. Then came the pandemic in 2019, 15 months of struggles with being open, closed, carry out only, outdoor seating at 25 percent during the height of the winter, on again off again. Despite that, we have made it through to today.

So how do small businesses like mine continue to operate and thrive in this post-pandemic world? We are currently facing food and supply shortages, transportation issues, big spikes in the costs of supplies and services and, as a lot of the rest of you, difficulties in finding reliable employees.

We need to make improvements and repairs, and the cost of building supplies are at an all-time high. The last thing we need are more Federal and State regulations, higher business taxes and higher energy costs. Profit margins in the restaurant and building industry are slim. We already face increased insurance costs, an

unpredictable labor market, and a cumbersome regulatory environment.

We use a lot of electricity in our food and brewing process and are blessed with an abundance and affordable clean energy source in natural gas here in New Mexico. Natural gas plays a role in the all-of-the-above smart plan, along with wind and solar that I strongly support here in Mexico. We have plenty of natural gas and petroleum domestically, so we don't want to be held hostage again by other producing countries, many of whom are not our friends. We have in the past seen what \$4 plus gas prices do to the economy and particularly to our low wage earners as a larger percentage of their income.

We need Federal regulations that are predictable so we can plan long term. We can't just change the rules in the middle of the game, which seems to happen too often.

We can't afford higher Federal tax rates for businesses, particularly small ones like mine that are already struggling to stay open and serve their communities. Small family-owned businesses are the backbone of both our rural and minority owned intercity businesses.

Refunding the SBA Restaurant Revitalization Grant program is essential. Eliminate the special class designation that got funding as it hurt many communities it was intended to help. While I am an old White guy, likely last in line and not funded, I serve a predominantly blue collar, rural Hispanic community.

We have made a difference in this community. We have survived COVID, but it is sad so that so many businesses around our State have not. Many have failed, not because they didn't have a good idea, but rather the mandates of local State and federal governments were simply impossible to overcome.

Thanks again for letting me share the Hub City Brewing story with you today.

Chairman CROW. Thank you, Mr. Greer.

I will begin by recognizing myself for 5 minutes.

Starting with Mr. Gilchrist, I am wondering if you could just flesh out further for me the issues of kind of just transition as it relates to small businesses? What does that look like in Colorado in particular? What has been successful?

What can we do better to make sure that as this transition, which is actually largely at this point market driven as we go to clean energy, renewable energy, that is a largely private market driven process since that energy is increasingly cheaper than fossil fuel energy, what can we do better to help those small businesses and communities during that process?

Mr. GILCHRIST. Thank you, Chairman Crow. That is a great question.

And I think one of the many things we need to focus on is community investment, you know, aligning State and Federal programs to assist local strategies, really community driven strategies that are ultimately led by many of the small business owners who are leaders in their communities.

We need to target early successes in business startups, you know, expansions, retention, and attraction, empower communities with resources to drive their own economic transitions as I men-

tioned, coordinate infrastructure investments to support local and regional transition strategies, and identify and support State, regional, Federal, and local institutions to facilitate needed investments. A lot of this work can help drive, you know, and attract grants and investments to power that local economic growth.

So ultimately, I think it starts with the community—reaching out to the community, learning what that community needs, what those small business owners need, what sort of investments they need and allow them to drive those solutions locally.

Chairman CROW. Thank you, Mr. Gilchrist.

And I am going to—instead of using the rest of my time, I am going to yield early to Mrs. Young Kim who has a competing hearing right now, make sure she has an opportunity to get her questions in, and then I can loop back later.

Mrs. YOUNG KIM. Oh, thank you so much for your consideration, Chairman.

I also, before I ask my questions to the witnesses, I wanted to recognize the presence of our Ranking Member of the committee, Mr. Luetkemeyer. Thank you so much for joining us, and our vice Ranking Member, Roger Williams, thank you for joining us.

You know, I want to pose a question to Mr. Greer. As I mentioned in my opening statement, corporate tax increases will directly cause utility costs to surge across the country and, as a result, small businesses will face higher electric, gas bills, like gas and water bills. So how would that impact your business, if you can be specific in terms of how, give me the numbers and how it will impact you?

Mr. GREER. Well, the utility costs as part of our operations is one of the largest, particularly in brewing beer. I use a tremendous amount of electricity. So however we are funded and however this energy is generated plays a major role on my bottom line.

Mrs. YOUNG KIM. Thank you.

You know, I want to talk about—we are talking a lot about the energy and infrastructure, but I think the infrastructure is met with a lot of burdensome regulations and red tape, and you talked about in your testimony that we need Federal regulations that are predictable so we can plan long term. I couldn't agree with you more on that. And you also said we can't just change the rules in the middle of the game, which seems to happen too often.

I also agree with you on that. I mean, it is really important that as Members of Congress, as policymakers, we need to set the policies that is predictable so our businesses can plan and, you know, succeed according to that.

So as a small business owner, can you explain to our committee how costly regulatory compliance is for small businesses?

Mr. GREER. Well, when you add together local, State, Federal regulations, just keeping up to date on the changes that are made in them is very burdensome for me because I am actually a—I make beer.

I don't have—I am a sole proprietor, along with my wife. I don't have a large staff who can keep me attuned to all of the idiosyncrasies.

We also, in the process of this, beyond running a small business and having the regulations of a lot of common businesses like ours,

we manufacture alcohol, so we have a whole other level of insurance regulations at the local, State, and Federal level for that and, of course, increased insurance costs and increased liability because of the product that we manufacture, so it is very difficult as things change around.

And one of the things that I have always been the most concerned about is as administrations change in Washington, we tend to have very quick steps taken in one direction or another that tend to influence what we are able to do, and we definitely need to have an opportunity to do a long-term plan and to be able to stick to that. And in a lot of respects with that, we are stuck in the middle.

Mrs. YOUNG KIM. You know, as Members of Congress continue to examine small businesses' recovery after COVID-19, is there anything that you can tell us that we should be doing to focus our efforts going forward?

Mr. GREER. Well, one of the things, the Restaurant Revitalization Grant Fund was very well written by the Small Business Administration, and I think it was very helpful to a lot of people. Its biggest problem was that it ran out of money, and I believe that there is some conversation going on in Washington about refunding some of that to be more useful to the rest of us. It is not large amounts of money, but as an example, for me I could double my capacity if I could spend \$4,000 that I don't have and drop another utility pole in to service my food truck. Right now I can run the truck or the brewery or the dish machine or my portable kitchen, but I don't have enough utilities at my disposal to be able to run any of them simultaneously.

And while that looks like a very small amount of money, my wife and I have been running this business as volunteers for the last 15 months just in order to be able to stay afloat. So that may seem like pocket change to some people, but that and demands for other things, food prices, transportation, the fuel costs of our truckers, you know, we are looking at \$4 a gallon fuel again, it is very difficult with the regulatory environment that we live in to make beer and serve my local community well.

Mrs. YOUNG KIM. Thank you so much.

I know my time is up. I will yield back. Thanks.

Chairman CROW. Thank you. The gentlewoman yields back.

We are going to go back and use my remaining 3 minutes now.

I want to start by just stating a few facts at the outset on the issue of taxes. I am obviously somebody, you know, that has a background in counseling small businesses and regulatory compliance and taxes. And a couple of just facts are that 95 percent of small businesses operate as passthrough entities and are exempt from the corporate tax rate. That is fact number one.

Fact number two is that there is a lot that goes into a business besides just the corporate tax structure, like skilled workforce, good education system that feeds that business and helps them grow, roads and bridges that can move their products to port, reliable energy, and an infrastructure grid, clean water to make beer and do other things with an increasingly degrading water system, all of which requires public investment. And if we don't have the revenue

to invest those things, we can't have growing and thriving businesses.

And I also say that, you know, the corporate tax rate was 35 percent in 2017, and going up to 28 percent for that small segment of non passthrough small businesses that would be impacted would, you know, not be devastating for those businesses. That is what business owners uniformly have been telling me. In fact, those investments that it would make would actually help the larger ecosystem and help them grow their businesses.

So I just wanted to set the record straight on that.

Before I go back to the members, I also wanted to ask Ms. Colon De Mejias, I am a huge fan of apprenticeship programs, and I know I see Mr. Garbarino on here who similarly shares my passion for apprenticeship programs. But I would love to hear from you very briefly on the role that apprenticeship programs in particular would play for helping workforce development because so many of these businesses just can't find employees. People are transitioning, and apprenticeships are really one of the best ways to do that.

Ms. Colon De Mejias.

Ms. COLON DE MEJIAS. Thank you.

We don't—in energy efficiency, we don't have a labor code so we don't have an apprenticeship program. We have kind of been working to advocate for a labor code so that we could start programs to have apprenticeships, so we kind of have to create our own training. I would be hopeful that there would be a tandem path to allow both to exist.

I think it is important to have an apprenticeship program in relationship to informing people that a business opportunity exists. Oftentimes people graduate school and they want to start an apprenticeship program and be an electrician or an HVAC person, and they don't know there are other lines of careers in our industry.

So I think it would be important to develop those labor codes and ensure that there was that opportunity for apprenticeship programs.

But I also think there are other conduits besides apprenticeship programs, like on-the-job training through an actual business, that could be just as well served and are much faster to get up and going. So in Connecticut, we have a program just like that that is starting actually in a week from now that will train people for these jobs. It would be great if there was a way to register them for those opportunities.

Thank you.

Chairman CROW. Thank you. I appreciate that, Ms. Colon De Mejias.

I will now go to the gentlewoman from Georgia, Ms. Bourdeaux, for 5 minutes.

Ms. BOURDEAUX. Thank you so much. Thank you, Chairman Crow and Ranking Member Ms. Young Kim, and thank you to our witnesses today.

Clean energy jobs are powering the economic recovery in Georgia and across the country. After an initial decline due to the pandemic, Georgia had one of the fastest growing clean energy sectors

of any State, growing over 29 percent between June and December of 2020, the second highest rate in the nation.

One thing I talk about with my business community is that we really have a chance to do well by doing good in Georgia, both tackling climate change and also building new opportunity for Georgia businesses.

The United States and Georgia have an opportunity to lead the world in clean energy technology, but it will require investment on the part of our policymakers to make that a reality.

I was very interested in hearing about the apprenticeship programs or the lack of those, and an issue also near and dear to my heart is workforce development, and I have recently visited some of the technical colleges in Georgia looking at some of the programs that they are putting in place.

And I wanted to just circle back to that issue with—actually, Mr. Gilchrist, I don't know if you have any insight on this, but at least since you sort of have a national view on it, you know, what do we need to be doing to build out the workforce for small businesses in this kind of clean energy technology space?

Mr. GILCHRIST. Thank you, Representative Bourdeaux. That is a big question, and I do have a bit of experience in this area.

The first thing is really investing in training programs and apprenticeships. You know, a lot of the union apprenticeships that we work alongside here in Colorado are already training their workers in clean energy. You know energy efficiency, as I mentioned before, is 2/3 of the workforce in clean energy. So, you know, those are jobs like insulators, you know, things that we don't necessarily think about in the trades. But the electrical workers especially are doing a lot of energy efficiency, the pipefitters (the United Association of Pipefitters and Plumbers) they are doing HVAC installations, which is a major energy efficiency upgrade. You know, the mechanical systems, updating and upgrading mechanical systems for buildings is extremely important, and that is a lot of work that can be done by highly skilled workers.

So, I think we often categorize clean energy jobs with solar installers, installers, you know, wind technicians. And while they really are oftentimes good jobs, they aren't necessarily always the highest paid or the highest skilled. So you have to look at really the vast majority of where those workers are, which is in energy efficiency and, like I said before in my oral statement, that you know, it goes way beyond our typical understanding of clean energy jobs.

But some things that we have done in Colorado, just this year we passed a bill helping to drive some innovation within training pathways for clean energy jobs. State Representative Dominique Jackson, who also resides in Congressman Crow's office, helped drive that bill which will work with the community college system, as well as a number of other stakeholders, to help create those pathways.

And, you know, frankly, we have been thinking about this for quite some time. Colorado has really been an innovator in creating non-traditional sector training partnerships, you know, through things like a group called Career Connect or through our Denver public schools and school systems around the State to help stu-

dents understand the breadth of opportunities, including in clean energy down the road.

So, you know, they like to think of it as sort of a way to marry the vocational system with the traditional college system so that students can get an understanding of what sort of other vocational jobs are out there that are earn while you learn, high-paying jobs that are really career oriented and especially those in the union building trades sector.

Another thing that we have done this year, which is sort of interesting, is to further incentivize, since we can't always predict the future, training programs, especially at the IBEW, and the pipe trades, which often take, you know, 5 to 6 years. So you have to start training those folks early on, and you can't do that without some understanding of what will be coming in the future. And so creating those incentives to invest in that cleaner, cheaper technology is really important.

And I understand we are running close on time, but I definitely have more to say about that, so—

Ms. BOURDEAUX. Okay. Well, I hope some other folks will ask some questions about that because I think we need to flesh that out and see to what extent we just need to bring the community together to put those pieces in place or to what extent, you know, we need to make some Federal investments in getting that training pipeline set up.

Thank you so much. And I yield back.

Chairman CROW. Thank you. The gentlewoman yields back.

I will now recognize the gentleman from Texas, the Vice Ranking Member of the committee, Mr. Williams, for 5 minutes.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In full disclosure, I am a small business owner, I have been for 51 years, and I am in the automobile business, and I am from Texas.

So under President Trump's pro growth policies and the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, small businesses were able to keep more of their hard-earned profits. They used this money to reinvest in their businesses, hire new employees, and increase purchase orders. Unfortunately, President Biden and my colleagues on the left are trying to undo this progress and increase taxes on corporations, pass-through entities, and capital gains in order to pay for their social and environmental agenda. These tax increases will put our small businesses at a disadvantage, there is no doubt, as they are they are still trying to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

And I have heard today from some of our witnesses that it is hard to find people to work. Well, if we quit paying people not to work, we would have people to work.

And I can also say this too, in due respect to our Chairman, I don't know a person in my district, not one, that wants to pay more taxes to the federal government with what we see how the federal government spends. So you cut taxes, it is more employees. You raise taxes, you have less employees.

So, with that in mind, Mr. Greer, can you elaborate how these tax hikes will affect your brewery and any pauses you have had to put on business investments due to this looming increase in taxes that the Democrats propose?

Mr. GREER. Well, one of the things, to be clear, is that the taxes on me individually as a small business are a struggle for us at the best because our margins are so small. The thing that is most critical to me are Federal, State, and regional taxes on all of my suppliers across the country that continually drive the price of the goods and services that I purchase from them up and continue to increase our costs in transportation and supply in our brewery work, kind of the end producer of this.

So taxes directly on me, the first year we were in business, when we added insurance, taxes, regulations, fees and all of the things together, 51 percent of my gross income in my first year went toward those expenses. So that will give you kind of an idea of the expenses at a small, small level. Every time we turn around, we find another fee or another tax or even, more importantly, changes in the taxes or the codes that we haven't been able to plan for or haven't been predictable.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Well, and certainly don't talk about making things retroactive. I would suggest you move to Texas. We don't have a lot of those fees. You might think about that.

Mr. GREER. I have been told that before.

Mr. WILLIAMS. The private sector is going to be the ones who bring the emission reducing or carbon capture technology to market which will ultimately help the environment and not increase government mandates which don't help the environment. Many companies are already investing their own capital and putting resources to achieving this objective without the government telling them what to do, but if companies are forced to pay more taxes or hire additional compliance officers to deal with the burdensome new mandates, they will have less money in their business to bring forward these new initiatives to find a solution for the climate change.

So, Mr. Hasselbeck, how can—in short, I am running out of time. How can the federal government better utilize resources to assist small businesses like yours to encourage investment and move innovative technology towards commercialization?

Mr. HASSELBECK. Thank you for the question.

And I think there is three fairly simple ways we can do it: A national training and incentive program to help us develop and coach 600,000 highly paid licensed electricians and clean energy technicians in a 15-year time frame; collaboration with the fossil fuel industry to map out an orderly transition to clean renewable energy, one that does right by the thousands of fossil fuel workers who have devoted their lives to powering our economy.

And then a national focus on elementary and high school programs which teach the benefits of a career in the trades. These must be supported by investments in trade schools and community college programs specifically geared towards the clean tech workforce while also avoiding massive levels of student debt.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Greer, since President Biden took office, main street America is facing a new threat of inflation, whether it is higher gas prices, increased cost of raw materials, or higher utility bills, small businesses are among those hit hardest again by these spikes. To effect the rising operational expenses, business owners have often had to shift the burden on to the consumer and raise prices for goods and

services, which you cannot do that much. You can't just raise prices.

Mr. Greer, how have these cost increases affected your brewery and what kind of adjustments are you making to make sure you can stay ahead of this inflation that has been created?

Mr. GREER. At this current time, the adjustment we have been forced to make is that my wife and I have been volunteers running our business for the past 15 months. The costs are not real controllable for us, and I live in a small rural, one of the poorest counties in the State of New Mexico, and we don't see any practical way that we could raise our prices.

Chairman CROW. The gentleman's time expired. We can loop back around for a second round.

Mr. WILLIAMS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Chairman CROW. I am going to recognize the gentlewoman from Illinois, Ms. Newman, for 5 minutes.

Ms. NEWMAN. Well, good morning. Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, Ranking Member Young Kim. This has been a great discussion this morning.

I want to start by lifting up some leaders from my home State of Illinois. In light of today's hearing, I ask that the committee—offer unanimous consent to submit a statement from Clear Flame Engine Technologies into the record. Clear Flame—

Chairman CROW. Without objection.

Ms. NEWMAN. Thank you.

Clear Flame Engine Technologies is a Black and women founded small business dedicated to decarbonizing technologies in the energy sector. Their statement can serve as a blueprint for small businesses in the energy sector, so so entered.

A couple of other comments, if I may, Chair.

So I would like to associate myself with Chair Crow's comments. Just to reiterate 95 percent of all small businesses will not be affected in any way by any tax increase and, again, it would be to 28 percent not to 35 percent, to be clear.

But I do have a couple of questions, and I think our witnesses today have offered great ideas. So my first set of questions would be to Mr. Hasselbeck, if I may. I love the notion of a national work training program. Do you envision this being a partnership of public and private and unions?

Mr. HASSELBECK. I do. I think, you know, the need for skilled workforce development is so great and so urgent, we need to explore any and all viable opportunities. And as I mentioned before, we've gotten a lot of advice and support from our local IBEW partners here, but there are other alternative passes as well like our own apprenticeship program which, you know, meets the same technical requirements, job site training, getting paid while learning, but it is a 4- and a 5-year program. So, as I think Mr. Gilchrist had mentioned, these take some foresight in investment to make sure that we are setting folks up for success right from the beginning.

A really common piece of feedback we get from our new employees is, man, I wish I knew that there was this opportunity when I was going to college or when I was starting out in my careers. And this is often a second career as they get into the trades. So

I think where the public and private partnership can come together is really that education at the early stage, and helping kind of really support these high school starting trade-based educational programs is a real career opportunity for long-term wealth creation.

Ms. NEWMAN. Thank you for that. And if you have any other materials on what you have done locally there, we would love to see that on the committee level. So please share if you can.

Mr. HASSELBECK. Yeah. We would be thrilled to.

Ms. NEWMAN. And then, Mr. Gilchrist, I am very excited about Just Transition. I started BlueGreen Alliance and Just Transition council in my district. So we will be reading your materials in earnest. But a couple of questions for you around how has played out in Colorado. Have you worked primarily with small businesses on this? Or who all participates, and who is seeing the most success and benefit right now?

Mr. GILCHRIST. Thank you, Representative Newman. That is also a good question. Also as you know, by being a lawmaker yourself, a robust stakeholder process is extremely important.

Ms. NEWMAN. Yeah.

Mr. GILCHRIST. And we work alongside a number of groups that bring small business voices to the policy discussions, you know, environmental entrepreneurs to—there is also the Colorado Outdoor Business Alliance, Good Jobs for Colorado, and many of our rural roundtables that, you know, all of those groups are convening across the State.

I think what has been fairly unique about this year, as you know, we are testifying virtually here, is that there has really been a great opportunity to bring in those voices from other parts of the State, those small business owners from places like Mesa County, from Pueblo County, which are, you know, are a lot further away from Denver than, you know, than we usually see.

You know, one of the things that has been really useful for them in developing this transition process, which, by the way, was created by the first in the nation legislation creating the office in 2019, and the action plan, which actually focused on community engagement, community listening sessions around the State, hearing from a lot of those voices, has led to some of these policy solutions we are seeing today.

So, we try to bring in, as you know, myself, you know, the work we do at NRDC, as well as all the legislators we work with trying to bring in those voices from across the State.

Ms. NEWMAN. Thank you. And more, please. And I yield back.

Mr. CROW. The gentlewoman yields back. I now recognize the gentleman from New York, Mr. Garbarino, for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARBARINO. Thank you, Chairman. Thank you for holding this hearing. And thank you to the witnesses for coming today. My first question to Mr. Greer, businesses on Long Island where I represent have suffered during, and in the aftermath of the COVID-19, especially our restaurants and taverns. Since being sworn into Congress, I have attempted to help many small businesses. In fact, one of my first acts as a member of this committee was offering an amendment to increase the funding available for the Restaurant Revitalization Fund. And the American Rescue Plan, unfortunately, was defeated.

Now, I am proud co-sponsor of the Entree Act, which is being offered by the Ranking Member, which would utilize unspent funds from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to assist American restaurant owners who are working tirelessly to serve their employees and communities.

Mr. Greer, you touched upon this a little bit in your testimony. How would the Entree Act and a properly funded restaurant revitalization fund program support you and your employees in the recovery, in addition to what you had already stated?

Mr. GREER. Well, I am not familiar with the new plan you were talking about, but the SBA revitalization—

Mr. GARBARINO. It would fund that bill up to almost about \$70 billion from where it is now.

Mr. GREER. Well, anything—you know, one of the concerns I have is I am seeing a lot of people who have taken advantage of loan programs over the last past year, and have not been able to grow their businesses coming out of this who are now in a position where they are having trouble about thinking about how to pay that back.

So small grant programs are, obviously, useful. One of the things that I—and we can use all the help that we can get. The restaurant industry was one of the hardest hit, along with tourism. The—I wanted to make a comment in here because a couple of times I have heard that small businesses like mine won't be affected by the changes in the tax rate, which may very well be true, except that all of my suppliers fall into that category of those who will be taxed, and that will increase my costs because there is certainly going to pass those on.

All the help we can get in getting this industry and the tourism industry out of this pandemic is useful.

Mr. GARBARINO. Right. I appreciate that, but the money that would come directly from the restaurant revitalization fund, if you would—did you apply for that, sir? Did you apply for a grant? Or did you not because you didn't know if you were going to get money?

Mr. GREER. No, we did apply. We qualified for a small amount of money, but it would have been enough to do the one task that I had of increasing our ability to power more of our building simultaneously. We did, and we were not—we were not picked. They said they ran out of money before they got to us.

Mr. GARBARINO. Okay. So you need more money to go into that program. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. GREER. Yes. Thank you.

Mr. GARBARINO. And this is just a general question. We are talking about—so far if anybody who wants to answer. We are talking renewables, renewable energy. I have spoken to small businesses in New York. I don't know if you know this, but by 2030, 70 percent of the energy that we produce has to be renewable energy, as well as 3,000 megawatts have to be produced by energy storage. I have spoken to small businesses, union shops that are going to be—they are very excited to work on the wind turbines and other projects that are going out there. But my question is a two-part question. Should nuclear energy be considered part of clean energy, and will that help with jobs?

And for the battery storage, something that I am running into, or our companies are running into that want to do it, are local municipalities and zoning laws, they are not being treated as public utilities, at least not in New York right now, so they have to come up with specific zoning laws, or comply with zoning laws. And a lot of people don't—a lot of NIMBYers, they don't want it in their area. So is that a problem—are you seeing—one, should nuclear be included in clean energy? And, two, the battery storage, are we seeing that kind of problem with local municipalities and zoning? So whoever wants to jump in. Mr. Hasselbeck, I see your hand up.

Mr. HASSELBECK. I would like to start with the battery storage question. ReVision Energy operates in four different States. And in those four different States, we have four different sets of jurisdictions and codes and standards. And it is certainly a significant challenge to have a single product offering, and insulation program that meets varying code standards, especially for new technologies.

We, too, like Mr. Greer, are often in a very rural area, and our local authorities having jurisdiction often struggle to apply codes and standards for technologies they don't have legacy experience with. So we spend a lot of our time and energy educating our local AHJs.

So additional support from the Federal level to streamline the permitting process for energy storage installations, and other technologies for that matter, is really helpful. Just last week—

Mr. CROW. Unfortunately, the gentleman's time has expired. I will now recognize the gentleman from Minnesota, Mr. Phillips for 5 minutes.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do appreciate it. And, Mr. Hasselbeck, I want to congratulate you on your recent B Corps designation. And I hope you could just elaborate for this committee why you decided to take that step to become a B Corps and an ESOP, as I consider that to be perhaps one of the most compelling possibilities for this committee to inspire for businesses across the country. If you could share a little about that journey in your decisions, we would appreciate it.

Mr. HASSELBECK. Well, absolutely, and thank you for asking. We think that additional Federal support for companies or organizations would prioritize both social and worker benefits as highly as profit margins is really important. So whether it is ESOPs, co-operatives, B Corps, those are all different strategies to achieve that goal.

Something that is particularly neat about ESOPs in general, is that not only the ESOP companies have, on average, a higher level of wages for all of their staff, they also perform better financially just as individual businesses. So we think that that is at real catalyst to growth.

Since 2017, when ReVision Energy became an ESOP company, we have seen our ESOP share values increase roughly 3,000 percent. And that benefits every single co-owner of my company, regardless of their job title, role, or responsibility level. So, we think that that is a really key long-term aspect of wealth creation. It is not just wages, it is wealth creation in the event of ESOP values. And making sure that the people doing the actual work, climbing up around on the roofs or out in the muddy fields, they need to

share the financial benefits of their company's success, and we think ESOPs are great.

We think the B Corps opportunity is great way to provide third-party objective certification to our different approaches. And that is really important for us. I am a construction guy, so I would appreciate metrics and goals and standards. And what we think is great from the B Corps, it is a very specific and a very detailed set of qualifications. And you are either doing this stuff or not, and it allow uses to be objectively measured and allows our consumer bases to take that objective measurement to say, You don't have to listen just to me, in my opinion. You can look at this third-party certification process that shows that, not only are we doing good for our employees and the workforce, but also our local social justice initiative. So it really just helps us kind of crystallize our individual company mission.

Mr. PHILLIPS. I love it. And as someone who believes deeply that businesses can and should be positive forces for good, Representative Chrissy Houlahan, my friend and colleague and I just started a caucus called the Stakeholder Capitalism Caucus, trying to encourage fellow Members of Congress to participate in encouraging such things.

So share with us, from a policy perspective, what can and should we be considering to inspire more ESOPs, more B Corps, and, frankly, more sharing from those enterprises that generate success with the people that help make it possible?

Mr. HASSELBECK. Sure. I think it is education. I was looking at the Committee for Employee Stock Ownership Programs, and I think there is somewhere around 6,700 ESOPs in the United States today, covering about 15 million workers. That is a tiny drop in the bucket. I think we have several million individualized small businesses throughout our country right now, and a lot of folks are just unaware.

I talked to industry peers and other businesses all the time who are very interested and curious about our ESOP transition process. And it is great story, but they just are not aware of the financial. There is really compelling tax benefits as well to becoming an ESOP, which helps us put our profits directly back into our people and our mission.

So I think education, and then of the opportunities out there—and it is still—it is—it is a regulatory challenging process to become an ESOP. It took us about 18 months. We had to reach a certain scale before we as a company had the capital to apply to the ESOP transition.

So, perhaps, some additional support for smaller businesses who want to become an employee ownership, who want to cover the employee ownership model, but don't yet have those excess dollars in their budget to dedicate to the time.

Mr. PHILLIPS. Terrific. Well, we would love to work with you towards that end, and encourage my colleagues to join us in this important mission. Sharing success is the most beautiful outcome of capitalism. With that, Mr. Chair, I see my time is drawing to a close, I yield back.

Mr. CROW. Thank you. The gentleman yields back. I will now recognize the gentlewoman from New York, Ms. Tenney for 5 minutes.

Ms. TENNEY. Thank you, Chairman Crow and Ranking Member Young Kim for holding this important hearing. And thank you to the witnesses for your time and expertise and insight into this important issue. Obviously, as a small business owner, the middle class is essential to this country. But my big concern, coming from a State like New York, is that supporters of the Green New Deal too often actually ignore the science of energy, and push economics that end up hurting our energy sector and our independence, and raise prices on consumers all the way through the line. Unfortunately, this administration has taken some of the Green New Deal priorities to heart, destroying our energy sector, making us more dependent again on OPEC, causing the gas prices to go up, and devastating families, and having among the highest energy costs in the nation.

In New York State, it has not helped our small business community, along with high taxes and over regulation. And on top of that, there seems to be very little effort on sourcing some of the essential materials we need for batteries, such as for solar panels. Our energy supply chain is more reliant on countries like China for our rare earth elements and those types of things. That is why I just—I would like to just ask a couple of questions.

As a small business owner that relies on a municipal power source to keep us going in New York, thankfully for that, but we have sort of a Green New Deal, actually, in New York State. But I would like to pose my first question to Mr. Gilchrist. In your testimony, you said how clean energy transition in Colorado has been a win-win for the State. However, Xcel Energy, Colorado's largest utility, has announced it is seeking a rate increase of nearly 13 percent next year.

So politicians keep hyping up the power grid that is completely reliant on solar and wind is cheaper than fossil fuels, nuclear and hydro, and some of those other resources, but those savings haven't seemed to pan out. What do you think has gone out with Colorado's clean energy transition? And how can we keep prices down and affordable for small business owners?

Mr. GILCHRIST. Well, I thank you, Representative Tenney. You know, I am not sure I can comment too much on Xcel's rate increases, but I can comment on what will help save small businesses money. And one of the things that I think Mr. Hasselbeck was getting at is another policy solution is creating a national building standard. You know, 13 percent of building—13 percent of overall emissions in the country come from commercial and residential buildings. So, if you create a national standard rather than a patchwork approach, then you can allow businesses to plan for that.

In addition, creating clean energy incentives, also on a national scale, where more folks across the country can take advantage of that, is literally putting money into the pocket of small business owners.

So that is where I think we have the most opportunity to really drive that investment. You know, as I mentioned before, clean en-

ergy businesses are small businesses. So, you are directly helping them create the micro capitalism where small businesses are literally helping other small businesses thrive.

Ms. TENNEY. I would like to reclaim my time. I come from a State, New York State is an original colony. We have buildings that some are 100 years old or even more. Our small business community is already overtaxed, overwhelmed with regulation. I am not sure how we would be able to invest in new building. We have a sea of buildings for sale, actually, in upstate New York, that people are looking to sell or to use that space, as a commercial property owner as well. So I am not sure that imposing another standard on building is actually going to be helpful for small businesses.

But another issue, I just want to address this to Mr. Hasselbeck as well. In your testimony, you advocate on behalf of wind and solar stating that in some circumstances, it is the lower cost source of domestic power generation than nuclear, coal, and natural gas—you know, nuclear being completely emission free. However, the manufacturing of solar panels and batteries are heavily reliant on rare earth minerals often sourced in China.

Would you also advocate for updated Federal regulations to make it easier to source those raw materials for batteries and solar that we need for those indications?

Mr. HASSELBECK. I would. We would advocate for that, because we think having a strong domestic supply of all materials within the supply chain is a critical part to create additional jobs, as well as to allow the United States to manage our costs. You know, similar to Mr. Greer's supply chain challenges, this is the most challenging year to be a construction company that certainly we can remember with rapidly increasing costs as well as increasingly delayed fabrication timelines.

Some of that, not all of that, some of that manufacturing is domestic. We buy a lot of U.S. steel. And that stuff is great, but I think some of these rare earth minerals would help us continue to reduce the costs and control our own supply chain.

Ms. TENNEY. Thank you. I think my time has expired. But I do know that most of these rare earth minerals are actually mined in the United States, sent to China to be processed and sent back. It would be great if our small business community could actually do the type of work on these rare earth minerals and keep it here and keep our jobs here. But thank you very much to the witnesses. I appreciate your testimony. I yield back.

Mr. CROW. Thank you. The gentlewoman yields back. I will now recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Luetkemeyer, the gentleman from Missouri for 5 minutes.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, a good hearing today. And I just want to comment on a couple of a comments that you made earlier with regards to, yeah, 95 percent of the businesses out there, S Corps passthroughs of some kind. But out of the C Corps, 1 million of those are small businesses. They are concerned about increasing taxes. And a statement where increasing taxes is helpful smacks to me of changing economics when you think taking money from people and redistributing it is a good deal. Changing economics has never worked in the history of this

country or this world. Increasing people's taxes, in my mind, is not helpful.

Mr. Greer, would increasing your taxes be helpful to you?

Mr. GREER. No.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. I understand your comment about being a volunteer. I appreciate that very much. Being a small business owner myself, I understand that you are the one that gets the last paycheck on the stack. And if you run out of money, that doesn't get to cover your check, so you don't get paid.

Mr. GREER. We are still here because we took a big cut of working as volunteers. We are lucky that we could do that. I am unlucky in that the paid staff still isn't working.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Yeah, it is interesting, you know, the studies show that these tax increases, for instance, for sure on C Corps are passed on to the customers, employees, as well as the owners. So tax increases are devastating.

Just a curious question here for you, Mr. Greer. I know that you talk about inflation. I will get to that in a second here. But there is a lot of other hidden costs that you have to pay, the things that have gone up. Has your unemployment insurance taxes gone up? Has your workman's comp gone up? Has your liability insurance gone up? Because I know because of the COVID pandemic, there is a lot of States that have raised their unemployment insurance rates to make up for the losses to the unemployment fund. Have you seen that in your State?

Mr. GREER. We have seen it in the State, a lot of it, because I have virtually no staff. And my staff that works for us are all owners in the business.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Okay.

Mr. GREER. But one of the things that is difficult for us is we have so many multiple tiers, particularly in liability, serving alcohol that it appears that the consumer of the alcohol is the last one being held responsible for any of the liability.

We just approved recreational marijuana. I know there is a conversation among the workman's comp insurance companies about whether, in anticipation of that, it might be a great opportunity for them to raise people's workman's comp, just in anticipation that there could be a problem. And I know that that has a lot of building trades really wondering about what is going to happen to them in the future.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. That is a very huge issue, depending on industry. And thank you for your comments. With regard to the restaurant program, this is something that we are looking at in trying to fix, quite frankly. You are one of the victims of the prioritization that was in the bill. In the bill, there was three separate groups that were prioritized over others. Unfortunately, you were not one of folks who were in the three initial priorities. And the bill has been viewed as unconstitutional by Texas and by Tennessee courts.

So that is hung up. Half the money has not gone out. Half the money has gone out. And all of the money is committed to all of those folks in those three first groups. We would like to fix that. There is a bill to do that. We want to try and find some sources of funds to be able to fund that at a level that you would be in-

cluded in that, sir. So hang with us. We are going to—we haven't forgot about you. We are going to work with you here to try and continue to help you along the way to keep your business going.

With regards to inflation, small businesses are getting creamed with inflation right now. And it started with, you know, restricting the pipeline up north and restricting permits. And as you saw, immediately, there was an increase in gas prices. That is a rippling effect to the entire economy. I think you mentioned it a couple of times already, the increased inflationary prices of energy that you faced with putting in your—the parts of your product that you need to make it work.

Mr. GREER. Well, the—I am heavily reliant on outside suppliers for raw materials. I am not a big business, but I still which, in itself, is difficult because I can't take advantage of some of the economies of scale that the larger brewers can. The transportation costs are also impacting this fuel. One of the things we have with the workforce is we don't have enough truckers out there running as well. It has been a very difficult supply chain thing for us because we truly are the end of the line.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. The ripple effect of increased energy prices is across the board, across all of your increased costs that you have for your inputs in your product as well, then you have to pass it along on the end game for the price that you charge for your product.

Mr. GREER. Energy is one of my biggest expenses.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. CROW. Thank you. The gentleman yields back. I believe we are out of additional members for questioning. So we will start to wrap the hearing.

So with that, you know, I always appreciate this committee's robust discussion on how to create jobs, how to grow businesses. The bottom line is, these are challenging issues. There is no doubt about it. Building a business, creating jobs, and spurring growth is not an easy thing to do. And I always appreciate that. The legislative process that this committee goes through to actually find the best way to do that. And part of that is just, you know, just the facts. And one thing that I will say in closing here is, I love facts because they just happen to be true. And a couple of those are that 95 percent of small businesses operate as passthrough entities and will be exempt from the corporate tax rate. Another one is that the administration's proposal, corporate tax rate structure proposal is that, number one, we actually spend—we actually pay for what we spend. We know that we have to make investments in infrastructure in this country. We know we have to do that. But there are—infrastructure is falling apart, and we cannot be a 21st century competitive economy and compete against China and others without strong infrastructure.

This proposal would actually pay for those investments. You know, unlike the record deficit spending that we saw under the Trump administration, we believe in fiscal prudence, we believe in being able to pay for what you spend.

The second thing this proposal really does is novelly that treats everyone equally under the law. We believe that if you are a huge corporation, that you should pay for some taxes. That you should

actually pay for the roads and the bridges and the things that you use as a major corporation, and not be exempt, because, frankly, it is the small businesses that end up paying those taxes and pay for that. And it is the large businesses they could exempt. So we believe in enforcement. We believe in making sure that everyone pays their fair share. And I think it is really extremely important component of this proposal.

The next one is when President Biden took office 6 months ago, the economy was just fluttering along, adding only 60,000 jobs per month. Today, we are creating over 600,000 jobs per month. The fastest growth at any point in any administration's history. Just dwell on that one for a moment. The unemployment rate is down to 5.9 percent after one of the worst employment crises in this country's history. What an accomplishment that is.

And then on the issue of inflation, almost unanimously, most economists say this is a natural blip post-recession, right? You always see, after recessions, an increase, because demand is outpacing supply. The supply chains are ramping back up, manufacturing is ramping back up, the supply chains are reaccommodating that, and that costs—that causes the increase in costs. And you always see that leveling out after those changes. Those are just facts, folks. That is what is happening. That is the assessment. I think it is extremely important that we talk facts so we can make good policy, and we can legislate appropriately. So with that, I look forward to continuing the work with—

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman, I would like to reclaim some time in opposition to make a rebuttal statement in closing.

Mr. CROW. No, we are going to close out, Mr. Luetkemeyer.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. We are always offered the opportunity. As you were able to articulate here for several minutes, we have the opportunity to also have our own voices heard in a closing.

Mr. CROW. Are you going to do the closing for Ms. Young Kim, the Ranking Member?

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Yes, I will do the closing.

Mr. CROW. Okay. When I am done, I will do that. One moment.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Okay.

Mr. CROW. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Thank you. Well, I appreciate the Chairman's reiteration and emphasis on facts. It certainly is important. As I have stated earlier, you know, increasing taxes is not helpful. Those taxes are passed on to customers, employees, and the less dollars are returned to the owners of companies.

When you talk about the jobs that are being created, we are still hundreds of thousands of jobs short from where the projections were by the administration, because we are not growing the economy as fast as it needs to be, and could be growing if we were to fix this \$300 check that is out there that doesn't allow people, or incentivizes people to stay home rather than go to work.

Again, the comments made about the supply chains. Yeah, supply chains are a problem, but they are broken because the people are not going back to work, and as a result, there is a shortage of parts, and there is a shortage of people, everything from truck driv-

ers to manufacturing employees, to people serving folks at restaurants because they are incentivized to stay home.

1.8 million people decided not to take the job they were offered as by the Morning Consult Poll just last week. Forty percent of the people can make more money staying home than they can going to work. Twenty-six States so far got rid of that \$300 check, and you have seen an increase in the employment in those States. That is why the numbers you see are going in the right direction from the standpoint of unemployment going down. That being said, we still have a huge problem with the labor participation rate in this country. It continues to go down because people do not go to work because they are incentivized to stay home.

So the programs and policies of this administration are not working. We are limping along. And being successful in spite of them, not because of them. I think that is the point we need to make.

Also, with regards to the tax bill and the infrastructure as you were talking about, it is interesting that—you know, I have talked to multiple electrical utility companies, an electrical generation company, executives who are talking about if we went to all electric vehicles, we don't have enough electrical capacity to provide the amount of electricity it is going to need to make this work. We don't have the power grid built up to make it work. And for us to then spend—and our numbers I have seen, anywhere from 120 to \$170 billion for electrical charging stations. That is like about building a bridge to nowhere because only 2 percent of the cars are electric right now. It would be much better spent if you wanted to spend 120-, \$170 billion to put in the roads and bridges, which improve the maintenance and ability of cars to run efficiently on those roads and over those bridges, or make energy efficient gas pumps. Why not make more energy efficient gas pumps instead of electrical charging stations that is costing \$150, \$200,000 apiece, and nobody is going to use them.

Mr. Chairman, this is the folly of this administration. This is the fallacy of the policies that are out there with. The American people are seeing this nonsense. And Mr. Greer on here today had some very salient observations about some of the problems, and he, as a small business owner, is directly affected because he has to wait for his paycheck until we finally make some money and get this economy going. With that, I yield back.

Mr. CROW. Thank you. The gentleman yields back. I always appreciate a robust debate and discussion. So I appreciate the comments and look forward to working with all of the members to figure out how we do what we all want to do and that is create jobs, grow our economy, and address the climate crisis at the same time.

So with that, I would ask unanimous consent that members have 5 legislative days to submit statements and supporting materials for the record. And, without objection, so ordered. And if there is no further business to come before the committee, we are adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 11:34 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

Testimony of Leticia Colon de Mejias

**CEO of Energy Efficiency Solutions and
Policy Co-Chair of the Building Performance Association**

**Before the
Committee on Small Business, Subcommittee on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and
Workforce Development**

**Hearing Title:
“Wealth for the Working Class: The Clean Energy Economy.”**

July 27, 2021

Chairman Crow, Ranking Member Kim, and honorable members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on how the clean energy economy—and energy efficiency in particular—can create good-paying local career paths which will act like catalysts and support small businesses and economic growth across the country.

I am Leticia Colon de Mejias, CEO of Energy Efficiency Solutions, Chair of Efficiency for All, and Policy Co-Chair of the Building Performance Association. I founded the home performance company Energy Efficiency Solutions (EES) in Windsor, CT in 2010. My direct service companies, EES Go Green, and Green Eco Warriors, which I also co-founded in 2008, have completed weatherization and comprehensive energy efficiency upgrades in over 14,000 Connecticut homes and 10 million square feet of multifamily properties. Beyond these direct services we have provided community education and outreach providing over 40,000 books and comic books which are STEM certified Energy Efficiency and Clean Energy Educational tools to communities across our nation. We have also trained people for these careers and helped others start their own companies. We also serve in the state of Massachusetts providing insulation and building science-based upgrades for commercial properties such as schools and through the MASS SAVES program, we have educated thousands of students at over 40 inner city schools.¹

We believe that knowledge is the power required to invigorate the American economy and provide career paths for those who have been historically left behind.

BACKGROUND

I started Energy Efficiency Solutions to lower carbon emissions and draw down the impacts of climate change on underserved and underrepresented communities. I left a successful 16-year career in healthcare because I wanted to ensure communities of color and the communities that I lived in and worked with had the support to directly draw down their energy usage, energy costs, energy related pollution and carbon emissions. I saw opportunities to create new career paths for communities which were unaware of these energy careers, and which were historically

¹ <https://www.gewportal.org/magazine/>

underemployed or unemployed. In Connecticut, where I live, we have the highest cost per kilowatt-hour in the nation. As the cost of energy continues to rise, the suffering in the communities I serve rises, too. In my state, over 400,000 households cannot afford their electric bills. Far too often, I have seen the elderly and children with no heat in their homes enduring winter temperatures. I have had to go in when their pipes busted and when they are at their greatest levels of despair. If I never joined this career, I would have never known how serious and important it is that we take immediate action to expand energy efficiency, demand reduction and clean energy in communities that have been historically left behind. Often our silo approach to solving problems widens disparity gaps, builds walls, and creates unnecessary hurdles for communities of color and underrepresented groups. Our approach seeks to build bridges and develop steppingstones to close those historic gaps for working families and underemployed.

There is no faster way to lift a family, a household, or a community than to provide viable, accessible career paths which allow Americans the capacity to financially support their families by having a good job.²

Energy efficiency is not only critical to improving energy affordability and quality of life for American families, it is also an engine for job growth and economic opportunity. In my work, I have seen how investment in efficiency can support good-paying local jobs and make a difference in people's lives, especially for underrepresented communities. At EES, we've utilized our Time, Talent, Teamwork and Tenacity to develop a staff of 22 people to serve over 1,400 households a year and draw down energy demand at colleges, community centers, fire stations, businesses, schools, and households. We've also spun new businesses off our original business, which are owned by people of color, women, and veterans. Beyond that, we created a program that helps our employees learn fiscal responsibility, understand civic engagement, learn how to buy houses and cars, start businesses, and ultimately help them find pathways which they can then share with their family and friends. These models can easily be replicated across our nation.

When we say EES is here to serve, we're not referring to the service of testing your HVAC combustion zones or installing insulation and windows. We're talking about service at the deepest level—the service that recognizes our need as human beings to be safe, to stay warm, to be fed, to be seen, to be heard, to be connected, and to find success. I strongly believe that human success begins with these principles, and this philosophy has led me to expand programs that reduce energy demand, energy costs, energy burdens, and energy pollution. Innovation is important—but we should also communicate our present-day successes, too, so that we can connect others to amazing opportunities in the clean energy space.

SMALL BUSINESSES POWER CLEAN ENERGY

As a small business owner, employer, entrepreneur, and policy co-chair of the Building Performance Association, I know firsthand that small businesses are the backbone of the Residential Energy Efficiency and Clean Energy industry. According to E4TheFuture's Energy Efficiency Jobs in America Report, in my home state of Connecticut 95 percent of energy efficiency (EE) businesses have less than 100 employees—and over 50 percent have five or

² https://efficiencyforall.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/EE-Health_2-18-2019_Flyer.pdf

fewer.³ It is extremely important that small businesses be at the table during the planning phases as we build our infrastructure for the clean energy economy. We are flexible and hire locally, providing jobs that can close long standing economic disparities. I believe there are no better groups than small business owners to bring people to new opportunities and careers.

Unfortunately, small businesses often do not have the time to keep up with what is going on here on Capitol Hill, nor the resources to make our voices heard during the legislative process. This can lead to policies that don't work for small businesses; policies that might have laudable goals but that aren't able to achieve those goals because they don't work on the ground. That is why today's hearing, and the work of this Subcommittee is so important. Inviting us to the table during the policymaking process can often avoid the bumps and bruises of developing new federal programs, or services, saving the federal government and taxpayer millions of dollars. Often, the best ideas come from the boots-on-the-ground trying to find ways to solve everyday industry problems as we listen to the communities we serve and the staff we employ.

WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

Finding workers that are skilled is difficult for every sector—but the energy efficiency (EE) and clean energy sectors have particularly suffered. I believe this is due to a lack of public awareness resulting in a lack of stable funding, support, and a start-stop approach. Training for these jobs is not that difficult, but it does require that workers have a basic understanding of building science and interpersonal soft skills. Unfortunately, what I have learned in my career is that many public schools do not teach this type of contextualized science and are often overly focused on technology leaving people lacking in interpersonal and soft skills. A lack of exposure to hands-on learning or work opportunities results in a lack of tenacity in our workforce. Contractors and industry leaders also struggle with a lack of soft skills, such as the ability to inform an employer about difficulties related to transportation, childcare, or other conflicts. When I started my company in 2010, we designed a training program which allowed people from the community to attend a six-week training session to learn all about the co-benefits of our energy work as it related to both human health and economic benefits. Our training yielded great results and helped these same individuals get hired locally. When we built the training program, we spoke with companies looking to hire in the EE industry. Companies told us they were not looking only for technical skill sets like the ability to use tools, climb ladders, enter basements and attics, but also softer skills, like educating home or building owners about upgrades and returns on investment. **In our work, we frequently find the need for training on the technical skill side or the soft skill side—and sometimes both. Either way, there is certainly a clear opportunity to train folks who are unemployed or underemployed, and leverage skill sets found in folks looking to transition to new careers like ours.**⁴

INDUSTRY DIVERSITY AND OUTREACH

It's clear that across America, there is a need to close workforce disparities as they relate to people of color, women, veterans, and other underrepresented populations, accessing career paths which are viable and offer longevity, as well as decent level of pay and benefits. That said,

³ <https://e4thefuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CONNECTICUT.pdf>.

⁴ https://www.eesi.org/files/Leticia_Colon_de_Mejias_093020.pdf

the energy efficiency (EE) and clean energy industry do offer all these things.⁵ I have staff that have worked for me for over 12 years. These staff came from underemployed or unemployed areas and in many cases, they had never worked in a technical job or even knew that energy efficiency and clean energy careers existed. Some of the staff who used to work for me, now own or manage businesses just like my own; and many of my past employees also now work in the Solar industry or other areas of the clean energy industry, managing staff, recruitment, performing sales roles, training, community engagement, or performing actual installations. There is certainly plenty of room for growth in this industry as we expand as a nation to meet our clean energy goals. These opportunities need to be communicated and training should be accessible.

We must continue to expand our outreach into populations that are underrepresented and underserved to ensure that communities of color gain access to Cradle to Career pathway support that would allow them access to these growing industries. Another way that we found success in engaging underrepresented populations in the Energy Efficiency careers programs and services and clean energy upgrades, is to reach out to educational programs, schools, and community centers and provide free educational tools that align with Next Generation Science Standards and Common Core Standards.⁶ Often, these communities and schools don't have access or support for energy, climate, and science education. Offering schools and communities free or low-cost educational tools and support allows access and opportunity for those communities to learn about these important topics; and this, in turn, helps them get engaged in the workforce. This approach is very successful and has overlapping benefits such as increased enrollment in energy saving programs and lowering energy bills.⁷

Robust investment in energy efficiency will create skilled jobs and stable career pathways with opportunities for growth in every state, not just for the moment, but for the long-term. With access to workforce development and training programs, struggling Americans can become fully equipped to fill existing jobs and new careers in this emerging clean energy economy. We are presented with an unprecedented opportunity to lift underserved communities by supporting displaced workers, and career changers, through recruitment and training for careers in energy efficiency. With expanded training we can connect displaced and transitioning workers, underrepresented populations, and historically disadvantaged populations to these job opportunities.

Along with expanded training, outreach and education are also vital. Despite energy being a necessity, most Americans don't understand where their energy comes from, or understand the interconnectedness of energy usage to our health and our economy. To help transition Americans into an energy efficiency and a clean energy economy, it is important for Americans to learn about energy, where it comes from, and what are the economic, social and health benefits and true costs.⁸

⁵ <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/093020workforce>

⁶ <https://www.gewportal.org/the-assembly-got-students-excited-about-saving-energy/>

⁷ <https://www.gewportal.org/green-eco-warriors-visit-oliver-ellsworth-elementary-school/>

⁸ https://efficiencyforall.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Indoor-Health-Barriers-v6_2-26-2021_rs.pdf

As the founder and Chair of the Green Eco Warriors, Inc., I have had the opportunity to create and share my understanding of the importance of energy, its impacts, and benefits through multiple mediums.

Green Eco Warriors is a Non-Profit Organization which provides sustainability education focused on Creating a Culture of Sustainable Thinkers™. Our goal is to educate and motivate youth and their families to reduce waste and lower carbon emissions through conservation-based education and behavioral changes. We provide live educational presentations and take-home tools which allow students to take the message and information on energy savings, conservation, stewardship, and agency home and to participate in civic engagement and STEAM based hands-on learning in the community.⁹

We have found that direct engagement through schools and community centers raises the understanding of these concepts rapidly. The key is to ensure the content is digestible and not too dense. We ensure our messaging and content is clear and motivating, calling people to direct actionable steps like signing up for a home energy solutions audit, as well as introducing them to our Switch It off, Save Energy & Save Dinero, and The Warrior Way programs.¹⁰

Our programs are targeted at school-age youth and families. We believe that by targeting youth as young as preschool students, we are building a culture of sustainable thinkers. We have also demonstrated that by using take-home tools, we can further extend the outreach to families and have a greater impact with less cost and lowered expenses to the programs and budgets.

Unlike commonly used take home trifolds and flyers, families hold onto the educational books and magazines and share the messages embedded, which they then share with extended families and friends. Early exposure to STEM concepts, energy education, and civic engagement leads to investigational thinking bridging to problem solving skills and developing personal agency-based mindsets. Knowledge is power and it is our duty to empower all Americans with information that will help them succeed and help our nation thrive together as we transition to an affordable accessible clean energy economy.

FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR EE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The energy efficiency and clean energy industry has not received the support necessary to expand and diversify to meet critical goals of inclusion, equity, and diversity. We must take deliberate actions at the federal level to expose Americans to industry job opportunities. We could do this by providing federal support to energy efficiency and clean energy companies – which as mentioned earlier are largely small businesses – to hire and train new employees. We must create Workforce Development programs that are accessible, affordable, and offer short pathways to gaining access to these skilled careers. We should also create public service announcements that explain why we are converting to a clean energy economy, how important it is for human health, how important it is for our communities, and how it will change our world and our country for the better. Once we provide information and inform Americans on the value,

⁹ <https://www.gewportal.org/the-green-eco-warriors-were-enthusiastic-and-compelling/>

¹⁰ <https://www.gewportal.org/it-was-one-of-our-most-successful-fundraisers/>

importance, and opportunities that this plan offers, I know that people will become engaged.¹¹ People cannot know what they do not know, and the first step to gaining knowledge or growing, is awareness and exposure to the basic concepts.

To prepare more American workers for quality jobs in energy efficiency and bolster the economy, Congress must act to support workforce development and jobs training, by passing the **Blue Collar to Green Collar Jobs Development Act (H.R. 156, 117th Congress, sponsored by Chairman Rush)**. The bill includes a crucial **Energy Workforce Grant Program** that small businesses can apply to directly to help them hire and train new workers as opposed to going through labor organizations or registered apprenticeship programs that do not exist for the home performance industry and often perpetuate diversity disparities. I urge Congress to support this type of direct support to make an immediate difference for our industry.

Small businesses like mine are the backbone of the efficiency industry, and we need assistance to help train our new hires and provide ongoing education to existing employees. **The Blue Collar to Green Collar Jobs Act** would provide direct support to small businesses with a focus on disadvantaged communities and ensure there are qualified workers to fill these vital American jobs. With access to workforce development and robust short-term training programs, struggling Americans can become fully equipped to fill existing jobs and new careers in this emerging clean energy economy. It would allow workers to expand their skill set, earn higher wages, and provide improved services and technologies. Importantly, the legislation would give priority to businesses that recruit employees from local communities, minorities, women, veterans, and workers transitioning from fossil fuel sector jobs - and it would also support critical on-the-job training and reskilling for these workers. The bill was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in the 116th Congress as part of H.R. 2 and H.R. 4447.

Congress can take immediate action to support nationwide investments in residential energy efficiency that help American families save money on their energy bills and improve their quality of life, while also creating local jobs and boosting small business and economic opportunity. The **HOPE for HOMES Act of 2021 (H.R. 3456, S.1768)** helps to support contractors and provide homeowner rebates for energy efficiency home upgrades, including enhanced support for moderate-income and working families that do not qualify for weatherization assistance.

HOPE would be paired with a \$8.4 billion **Home Owner Managing Savings (HOMES) rebate program**, to be authorized through 2027 (or until expended). The HOMES program would provide rebates to homeowners and multifamily property owners who undertake energy efficiency home retrofits, thereby supporting contractor small businesses who are providing energy efficiency products and installations for their customers. It would also create a vital stimulus – encouraging property owners to undertake energy retrofits and driving demand for these highly trained workers. This will result in the creation of local jobs that cannot be outsourced, and a massive upgrade to this nation's residential housing stock.

We must also ensure that funds and activities to support energy efficiency workforce development are accessible to small businesses and include flexibility to use funds for on-

¹¹ <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/8769208179771457807>

the-job training. There is no Department of Labor code for energy efficiency, so it has been very difficult to access federal and state funds for energy efficiency apprenticeship programs, particularly in the residential sector. The Department of Energy has a much better understanding of this industry and its support for residential energy efficiency businesses is crucial.

There is also a need for continuing education, because these industries change rapidly, and oftentimes small businesses are left behind. Too often, I've seen small businesses train workers, only to see them leave to work at larger businesses like electric generation companies or ESCOs. In my experience, continued Workforce Development on-site marks an excellent way to retain talent. Small businesses need support for continued Workforce Development so that we can continue to grow, pay taxes, and add value to the communities that we serve.

Through my work at Efficiency for All, we have developed customizable, stackable, and scalable workforce development programs and educational tools that will provide individuals the technical and soft skills needed to begin a new career in the energy efficiency field.

Efficiency for All is currently conducting a 6-week workforce program with our Governor's Office of Workforce Strategy (OWS) and Capital Workforce Partners (CWP) for 10 individuals. These individuals will receive the soft skill training and Building Performance Institute (BPI) certifications in building science required to be employed as a BPI Lead Technician in the Home Energy Solutions program in Connecticut. The workforce program will place these individuals in a six-week on-the-job (OJT) positions with local energy efficiency contractors for hands-on experience and an opportunity to be hired directly thereafter. Once these individuals successfully complete this program, they will qualify for open positions that are in high demand and provide them the opportunity to earn between \$35,000.00 to \$60,000.00 annually.¹² These career paths also provide retirement, insurance, paid time off, and other important social benefits.

CONCLUSION

I believe that the time to diversify our clean energy workforce is now. Most of my staff come from at-risk and underserved populations, but that has not held us back. We have continued to grow, all while supporting the communities we came from because our work can help everyone. The sooner we educate our communities on how to draw-down energy demands and how we can ramp up clean energy resources, the better off we will all be. As a proud American and small business owner, I know that together we can create a responsible path forward to ensure an inclusive transition to a clean, resilient, reliable, affordable, accessible, clean energy economy, which will benefit all Americans regardless of economics or social standing.

You can learn more about the importance of Energy Efficiency at www.efficiencyforall.org, and about our successful projects drawing down energy demand and creating career paths at www.eesgogreen.com. Visit www.greenecowarriors.org to find information about Cradle to Career and supporting materials that engage minorities and communities of color.

¹² <https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/093020workforce>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Dinero the Frog Learns to Save Energy](#) - by Leticia Colon de Mejias, (Illustrator) Tamara Visco *Dinero the Frog Learns to Save Energy* is a fun and educational book regarding energy conservation and how changing simple habits and behaviors can protect the environment. Poppi™ the Frog, teaches his grandson Dinero about energy, how we use electricity, what renewable and non-renewable energy sources are, and how we can make smart energy-saving choices. This book aligns with the following Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS): NGSS-K-ESS3-3, NGSS-4-ESS3-1, and NGSS-5-ESS3-1 and the following Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for English Language Arts: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.7, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.8, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.4, and CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.8. Additionally, Green Eco Warriors has aligned *Dinero the Frog Learns to Save Energy* with 2010 Science Curriculum & Assessment Expectations and 2015 Social Studies Frameworks. ISBN: 9780982216897, Date Published: 03/17/2013

[Defeating the Phantom Draw](#) by Leticia Colon de Mejias, Casey Dilzer (Illustrator), Rebecca Meyer (Editor) *Defeating the Phantom Draw* is a fun and educational book about where electricity comes from and how we can use our minds and actions to make choices that save energy and defeat the Phantom Draw. This book aligns with the following Next Generation Science Standards: 4-PS3-2, 4-PS3-4, 4-ESS3-1 and 5-ESS3-1. ISBN: 9780989336451, Date Published: 11/26/2014

[Green Eco Warriors - The Beginning, Issue 1](#). The comic book series starts with the introduction of another superhero, Cambio (Spanish for change). Cambio locates future Green Eco Warriors: Amelia, Juan, Kalil, Liam and Nya at their school and informs them that they each have superpowers that can help protect the earth. The villains Mr. Big Corp, the Meddler, and the Phantom Draw make their debut too, with the hope of stopping Cambio and the Green Eco Warriors. ISBN: 9780989336420, Date Published: 04/27/2014

[Green Eco Warriors: Defeating the Phantom Draw, Issue 2](#). Leticia Colon de Mejias, Casey Dilzer, Shawn Brewery Issue No. 2 finds Cambio teaching Amelia, Juan, Kalil, Liam, and Nya (the Green Eco Warriors) about phantom power and the evil Phantom Draw. Will the Green Eco Warriors be able to work together as a team and use their superpowers (brains and actions) to save the environment and defeat the Phantom Draw? ISBN: 9780989336444, Date Published: 09/11/2014

[Green Eco Warriors - The way of the warrior! Issue 3](#). Issue No. 3 finds Dinero teaching Amelia, Juan, Kalil, Liam, and Nya (the Green Eco Warriors) about the way of the warrior and how he met Cambio. We also learn who Dinero is and where he comes from. What will the Green Eco Warriors learn about next? How will they be able to share the message of conservation and change with the world? Will they be able to help people change in time to save the planet from destruction and the evil powers of Mr. Big Corp and his flunkies? ISBN: 9780989336475, Date Published: 04/06/2015

Addressing Health and Affordability Challenges for Low-Income Families, EFA (March 2021)

<https://efficiencyforall.org/wordpress/2021/03/01/addressing-health-and-affordability-challenges-for-low-income-families/>

Green Eco Warriors Magazine This publication aligns with Next Generation Science Standards (4-ESS3-1, 4-ESS3-2) and CMT Science Standards (4.2 B.11) for grade 4.

Health and Safety Barriers to Weatherization Study (Yale, March 2017)

<https://efficiencyforall.org/wordpress/2020/08/15/health-and-safety-barriers-to-weatherization-study/>

Home Energy Affordability in Connecticut: The Affordability Gap (2017)

<https://efficiencyforall.org/wordpress/2019/01/23/home-energy-affordability-in-connecticut-the-affordability-gap-2017/>

Saving Energy, Saving Lives: The Health Impacts of Avoiding Power Plant Pollution with Energy Efficiency (February 2018)

<https://efficiencyforall.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/h1801.pdf>

Energy Efficiency in Connecticut (April 2017)

https://efficiencyforall.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/EE-2_13-Slides-2.pdf

EESI Briefings Sept 30, 2021, Low-Carbon Small Business and Post-COVID Recovery Briefing Series: Workforce Wednesdays

<https://www.eesi.org/briefings/view/093020workforce>

June 24 2021 National DOE Better Buildings State of the Covid Economy

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/8769208179771457807>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8j-YJdbWZY&t=247s>

GC3 and Energy Equity Work <https://efficiencyforall.org/wordpress/2020/02/25/governors-council-on-climate-change-gc3-equity-lens/>

https://efficiencyforall.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/EE-Health_2-18-2019_Flyer.pdf

https://efficiencyforall.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Indoor-Health-Barriers-v6_2-26-2021_rs.pdf

<https://efficiencyforall.org/wordpress/2020/11/22/addressing-health-safety-barriers-in-ct/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8j-YJdbWZY&t=247s>

Solve Climate 2030- International Presentation Video

<https://efficiencyforall.org/wordpress/2020/04/07/an-affordable-way-forward-energy-efficiency/>

https://youtu.be/l_7MUIDb2E0

Creating a Culture of Sustainable Thinkers™ supportive links to learning more

www.gewportal.org

[Green Eco Warriors--Who We Are, https://www.gewportal.org/magazine/](https://www.gewportal.org/magazine/)

[Story Time with Leticia Colon de Mejias, https://www.gewportal.org/story-time-with-leticia-colon-de-mejias/](https://www.gewportal.org/story-time-with-leticia-colon-de-mejias/)

[Green Eco Warriors - Dinero the Frog Learns to Save Energy Video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOaMWYgWmX4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOaMWYgWmX4)

[Low-Carbon Small Business and Post-COVID Recovery, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8j-YJdbWZY&t=247s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8j-YJdbWZY&t=247s)

[Invest in Energy Efficiency to Create Local Jobs & Restart the Economy, https://www.eesi.org/files/Leticia_Colon_de_Mejias_093020.pdf](https://www.eesi.org/files/Leticia_Colon_de_Mejias_093020.pdf)



June 24th, 2021

Written Testimony of James Hasselbeck
Director of Operations, ReVision Energy, Inc.

U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Small Business
Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce Development Sub-committee
Wealth for the Working Class: The Clean Energy Economy
June 27th, 2021

Chairman Crow, Ranking Member Young Kim, and esteemed members of this Committee. My name is James Hasselbeck, and I am the Director of Operations of ReVision Energy, Inc. I am grateful to provide testimony today on behalf of my 300+ fellow employee-owners.

My goal this morning is to tell you all a bit about my company and who we are, the urgency of the climate crisis, why we must act quickly and boldly to take advantage of this once in a generation opportunity for job creation, some solutions the ReVision Energy team have identified, some challenges to implementation and finally, how this committee can help knock down some of those barriers and help us provide well-paying, secure and dignified clean energy jobs for millions of Americans.

ReVision Energy, Inc. is headquartered in Northern New England with five facilities across Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. We are a 100% employee-owned renewable energy contracting company that provides a full range of engineering, installation and finance services for homes, businesses, municipalities, and nonprofits in our communities. ReVision Energy was founded in 2003 by two guys in a Waldo County barn and from those humble beginnings has grown to a team of over 300 renewable energy professionals. A team that just last week was recognized by Solar Power World magazine as the country's #10 Rooftop Solar Contractor.

Our mission is to help transition our communities to 100% clean, renewable energy and to solve the environmental problems caused by fossil fuels while alleviating economic and social injustice. We firmly believe that business can, and must, be a force for good. Our demonstrated commitment to our workers, communities, and planet earned us "Best for the World" in the workers category recognition from B Labs in 2021. Certified B Corporations are companies that make explicit our commitment to multi stakeholder capitalism and expand our legal obligations to a broad group inclusive of our employees, customers, suppliers, communities and the environment. The impacts on those stakeholder groups are annually reviewed and certified by an objective 3rd party, B-Labs, to assure compliance and continuous improvement. ReVision Energy is proud to be a B-Corp and we take their rigorous standards seriously.

We accomplish our mission through the construction of photovoltaic solar systems, energy storage solutions, clean heating and cooling technologies and electric vehicle charging infrastructure for Residential, Commercial, Non-Profit and Municipal customers. At the end of the day, we are a construction company that specializes in actually building clean tech. We have been fortunate to find success in these efforts and have seen our company and impact grow exponentially over the past 18 years.

While this growth is both humbling and amazing to look back on, it is not nearly enough. The urgency of the climate crisis is real, and we have much work to do to solve this enormous problem. As I speak to you today, there are millions of Americans whose homes or property is being negatively impacted by climate change. Things are literally on fire or under water, and middle ground is increasingly difficult to find. While these challenges impact Americans in all states, the worst effects of the climate crisis inordinately harms our most vulnerable citizens.

While the stakes feel rightfully high, we are exceedingly optimistic because the solutions exist and are available to us today. We, as a country, have the technology, motivation and public interest to solve these problems via the increased installation of clean energy and storage, modernizing our national grid and electrifying our transportation infrastructure. The private sector is well aware of these solutions, and is accordingly allocating



hundreds of billions of dollars in capital for these projects. This influx of private sector investment, often catalyzed by early-stage government support, has resulted in renewable energy technologies being the most cost-effective electricity generation sources available on the market today.

Lazard's most recent Levelized Cost of Energy Analysis objectively demonstrates solar and wind being the lowest cost source of power generation available domestically. Well below Nuclear, Coal and even natural gas. This analysis is proven out by the massive investments in renewables, with solar plants alone making up over 40% of new electricity generation assets being brought online in 2020, more than any other single technology. As manufacturing capacity for batteries continues to expand and prices continue to fall, we are seeing increasing adoption in energy storage coupled with renewable generation assets. This is solving some of the historical challenges of the natural intermittency of renewable generation. This influx in investment in battery storage is also evident in the rapid expansion of electric vehicles and associated low-carbon transportation infrastructure. I know my construction teams are thrilled at the idea of charging their power tools and laptops on a remote jobsite using excess battery power from their F-150 Lightning instead of lugging a heavy generator around which needs constant maintenance and fuel out in the boonies.

The technology works, the money works and the public and private interest and desire for renewables is expanding at a rapid pace. So rapid, that our collective barrier to increased adoption is increasingly less economic or technological, but instead an inability to execute for one simple reason. The renewable energy transition is utterly dependent on a highly skilled workforce to actually build these projects. You cannot outsource or "offshore" clean energy project installations, so we must meet that need domestically. This workforce already includes over 230,000 Americans at 10,000+ small businesses as evidenced by the most recent 2020 studies completed by the Solar Energy Industries Association. This same workforce needs to expand to over 900,000 to achieve the ambitious, but necessary, 100% clean electricity goal President Biden has set for 2035. That's nearly 300% growth, we need some help!

ReVision Energy is powered by the excellence of our employee-owners and so hiring passionate, creative, smart, and hardworking people with a variety of historical professional experience has always been at the forefront of our approach. Ours is not a legacy industry, meaning that often we must build a new workforce for jobs that did not previously exist. In addition to the typical trials of running and growing a small business, hiring excellent people has been one of the most significant challenges to our continued growth and success. This is not unique to us, and hiring is the most often cited barrier by my industry colleagues.

The women and men on our installation team are electricians, plumbers, and roofers. They are supported by engineers, systems designers, project managers, procurement agents, business development specialists, financing and legal experts. ReVision Energy is a construction company that relies on excellent people to build excellent things that provide low cost and carbon neutral critical infrastructure to our community. We self-perform millions of dollars of construction work in New England each year with our in-house teams and work closely with our licensed electrical sub-contractor partners on building many more megawatts of clean power with their help. This also creates millions of dollars in revenue and corresponding jobs for our many domestic suppliers and material vendors. As hard as we try, even with the support of our incredible allies, we cannot meet the demand for highly skilled tradeswomen and men.

Finding high quality employees is a challenge for many businesses, increasingly so today. As a certified B-Corp, ReVision Energy believes strongly in creating an environment which prioritizes personal and professional growth, diversity and inclusion with clear focus on shared social and financial benefits. We think those aspects are foundational cornerstones to a successful company culture and business in general. Accordingly, in 2017, the four co-founders of ReVision Energy made the decision to transition their company to employee ownership via a 100% Employee Stock Ownership Program (ESOP). This decision put the future success, and financial benefits associated with said growth, directly in the hands (and Retirement Accounts!) of the people who are driving this success by doing the actual work.



There are countless benefits of having 100% of a team sharing in the financial achievements of the company. ESOPs are an existing and demonstrably successful way to transfer wealth to the working class. According to the National Center of Employee Ownership, there are currently over 6,700 ESOPs operating in the United States with over 14 Million participants! While we have seen increasing growth and interest in ESOP transitions, we ESOPs are still a tiny percentage of companies compared to the millions of conventionally structured businesses nationwide. Federal programs, incentives and education to increase awareness of employee ownership would provide meaningful long-term benefits to all industries, not just Cleantech, and can play a key role in rebalancing income inequality. ESOP companies typically provide higher wages, better benefits and perform better financially overall. We are just one example of many.

In addition to Revision's commitment to sharing the financial benefits of our construction activities via our ESOP program, we also recognized the need to be more proactive in our recruitment efforts. We are proud that year to date, 54% of our hires are inclusive of women, veterans, persons of color, and those who self-identified as having a disability. That takes work, especially in our region of the country, but we believe the benefits of proactively reaching out to historically underserved communities and groups are significant.

We also recognized a challenge in finding trained and licensed tradespeople. As a response, in 2018 we created the ReVision Energy Training Center (RETC) and associated ReVision Energy Electrical Apprentice Program (REEAP). This dedicated division, particularly REEAP, would become a cornerstone for our ability to recruit, hire, train and support people who are interested in the trades. In partnership with state regulatory agencies and the Federal Department of Labor, we established our electrical apprenticeship program to help our team achieve the electrical licensing that not only benefits ReVision and allows us to continue our important work, but also provides each individual a trade license and skills to secure a high standard of living for the balance of their careers.

Today, we are proud to be supporting 64 apprentices who are currently working their way through this program, and many more graduates who are now fully licensed individuals leading our construction teams. While we view this program as a success and important tool, it is not nearly enough. Building this apprentice program was labor intensive, challenging from a regulatory perspective and expensive. We were unable to make these important investments until our company achieved a certain scale, and I know that thousands of other small businesses are struggling with this same issue. I hear this message often from some of our peer companies in the Amicus Solar Cooperative. This cooperative consists of clean energy businesses throughout the country who share our B-Corp values and collaborate to support each other.

We believe that there is a significant need for additional funding, support, and resources for workforce development programs throughout the country, with a particular focus on the trades. We are strong supporters and advocates of existing programs managed by local and national trade unions. ReVision Energy has worked closely with union contractors, primarily IBEW members, for over a decade on the installation of large-scale solar energy projects. Organized labor's focus on worker benefits, safety and career training is admirable and a critically important part of any workforce development programs. We highly value our historical partnership with the IBEW, especially our good friends at the Local 490 who welcomed Vice President Harris to their facility in April and look forward to expanding that relationship.

However, we want to be abundantly clear in highlighting that there are other methods to facilitate workforce development, safety, and worker benefits outside of conventional union structures. We think our 100% employee owned, certified B-Corp company structure (shared by many of our Amicus partners) provides an equally valuable platform for worker's rights, specifically including wages, safety, long-term career trajectory and employee ownership corporate models. We strongly encourage the committee to look for opportunities to provide funding and support to alternative workforce development initiatives in addition to the existing, well established, and successful union programs. The workforce need is so great, and so urgent, it is essential we support all viable options to meet that need.



Today, we have the cost-effective tools to abandon fossil fuels, but we need to accomplish this long-term clean energy transition in an orderly fashion that does not cripple a national and global economy currently over-reliant on traditional energy inputs. The good news is that manufacturing and then building the renewable energy infrastructure of the future is the biggest job creation opportunity in a century. We have witnessed Tesla becoming the most valuable car company on the planet in the span of just 15 years, just one example underscoring the colossal wealth creation potential of clean technology. The coal miners and oil rig roughnecks of today can absolutely be a part of the clean energy workforce of tomorrow, frankly we need their construction and safety expertise to build all of these projects. I want them on my team.

Infinite, non-polluting renewable energy has immense power to democratize our energy and societal systems because distributed clean energy does not require the old paradigm of extreme wealth concentration in the form of companies like ExxonMobil. With a modest, low-risk financial investment, anyone can harvest free sunshine and wind instead of perpetuating the polluting, capital-intensive mining, drilling, fracking, transporting, refining, distributing and then combusting inefficient fossil fuels.

Here are 5 things we need most urgently to help the United States accelerate the clean energy transition:

1. National training and incentive programs to develop and coach 600,000 licensed electricians and clean energy technicians in a 15-year timeframe.
2. Collaboration with the fossil fuel industry to map out an orderly transition to clean renewable energy – one that does right by the thousands of fossil fuel workers who have devoted their lives to powering our economy and whose services we will still need to safely decommission and repurpose our fossil infrastructure
3. National focus on elementary and high school programs which teach the benefits of a career in the trades supported by investments in trade schools and community college programs specifically geared towards the clean technology workforce while avoiding massive student debt.
4. Consistent and long-view federal energy policy to allow private sector investments to continue without fear of regulatory changes impacting project development cycles or financial models.
5. Additional Federal support for companies or organizations which prioritize social and worker benefits as highly as profit margins such as cooperatives, B-corps and many others.

On behalf of the co-owners of ReVision Energy, we are grateful for the opportunity to share our story with your committee. Every single day we are working towards our goal of reducing our community's reliance on fossil fuels while creating good paying careers and long-term wealth for our employee owners and their families. As a proud father of 3 young children, I go to work every day knowing that I and my co-owners are creating real and positive change for them, and believe every American should have that same opportunity. We are incredibly proud of our collective accomplishments so far, and excited to welcome hundreds of thousands of additional Americans to our clean energy workforce in the coming years.

Thank you,

James Hasselbeck

Co-Owner | Director of Operations
ReVision Energy, Inc.

**Written Testimony of Sam Gilchrist – Western Campaigns Director, Center for
Policy Advocacy**

Natural Resources Defense Council

**Before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Small Business Hearing
entitled: *Wealth for the Working Class: The Clean Energy Economy***

27 July 2021

Good morning Chair Velazquez, Ranking Member Luetkemeyer, and distinguished members of the House Committee on Small Business. I want to thank you for holding this hearing on *Wealth for the Working Class: The Clean Energy Economy* and inviting me to testify and provide comments.

My name is Sam Gilchrist. I am the Western Campaigns Director in the Center for Policy Advocacy at the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). NRDC is an international nonprofit organization of scientists, lawyers, and environmental specialists dedicated to protecting public health and the environment. Founded in 1970, NRDC has more than 3 million members and activists supporting work to protect public health, the environment, and grow more sustainable livelihoods.

Prior to joining NRDC, I served as the Executive Director of the Colorado AFL-CIO, where we represented over 130,000 workers, many of whom worked within the broader energy sector, including coal and fossil fuel industries. We also worked closely with advocates for the environment on policy solutions to ensure these workers and their communities have a future in the clean energy economy. Since joining NRDC, our partnership has grown to include direct collaboration on policy solutions to see this through.

The climate crisis is affecting communities across this nation in terms of both our economic and physical health. Single-industry towns are facing economic uncertainty as market forces make it less economical to produce energy from fossil fuels. The decline of coal is being accelerated by the urgent need for us to reorient our energy policies away from burning fossil fuels in favor of cleaner, cheaper renewable energy.

The Coming Energy Transition

The U.S. coal industry has declined precipitously in recent decades due to a combination of automation in mining and declining costs of other fuel sources such as natural gas and renewables. For communities largely dependent on coal for high-paying jobs and local tax revenue, the closure of coal mines and power plants can be economically catastrophic and socially disorienting. The trauma caused by shifting economics is long lasting and involves the entire community. As the country's energy landscape continues to transition toward a low-emissions future, we must support communities affected by these changes in their own transitions from the extractive economy to diversified, socially and environmentally regenerative economies. The process of building place-based economic stability in the shift

from an extractive to a regenerative economy is sometimes referred to as a “just and equitable transition.”

We have witnessed similar situations before, but we have not always been prepared to address them proactively, leaving many communities behind with small, local businesses bearing the economic impact. With appropriate investments from private sources, supported by state and federal policies and strategic investments, we have an opportunity to strengthen small businesses, diversify local economies and tackle climate change by investing in a just and equitable transition for communities that are economically tied to the fossil fuel industry.

My home state of Colorado is well on the way to addressing this issue through local solutions, such as funding for retraining affected workers, wrap-around services for workers and community members, and increased private investment to rebuild local economies.

We are also seeing state policy solutions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions while also increasing work for qualified contractors, such as a recent bill¹ requiring utilities to create programs to promote the use of efficient, healthy electric mechanical equipment and appliances in homes and businesses. This work will be done by skilled, licensed contractors that are often small businesses. Colorado is also leading in making sure that homes, businesses, cities, and towns have the capital to invest in future sustainable growth. It is imperative that the jobs created by the clean energy transition are good, family-sustaining jobs with defined benefits and pathways to unionization. We also need to ensure that underserved communities have equitable access to this prosperous future.

Colorado’s GHG Reduction Roadmap

In 2019, the Colorado legislature passed HB19-1261,² which required the state to develop a pathway to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets of 26% by 2025, 50% by 2030, and 90% by 2050 from 2005 levels. The state details this plan in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Roadmap,³ which outlines specific measures for the state’s highest emitting sectors, including transportation, electricity generation, oil and gas development, fuel use in homes, and business and industrial applications. Specifically, the state needs to quickly achieve the following reductions, as stated in the roadmap:

- Continue swift transition away from coal to renewable electricity
- Make deep reductions in methane pollution from oil and gas development
- Accelerate the shift to electric cars, trucks, and buses
- Make changes to transportation planning and investment and land use planning to encourage alternatives to driving
- Increase building efficiency and electrification
- Reduce methane waste from landfills, wastewater, and other sources

¹ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb21-246>

² <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb19-1261>

³ <https://energyoffice.colorado.gov/climate-energy/ghg-pollution-reduction-roadmap>

In addition to the state Roadmap, NRDC and partners authored a report⁴ that shows we can achieve many of these emissions reductions in a healthy and equitable way. Further information on the report results can be found in a series of blogs from my colleagues⁵ Ariana Gonzalez and Arjun Krishnaswami.

Although transportation is the largest segment of Colorado's emissions, coal-fired electricity generation is a close second and coal plant closure is the focus of my testimony. To achieve the necessary emissions reductions outlined in the roadmap and avoid the worst effects of climate change, the retirement of the state's coal plants is necessary to achieve at least half of these target reductions. Given the increasing cost to generate electricity from coal and fossil fuels, it also makes economic sense to close these plants.

As mentioned, localities across the country have faced this type of economic uncertainty before as single-industry towns see their main economic generators close. Big changes are coming to both the energy and transportation sectors, which could cause significant economic and workforce implications if handled improperly. The difference now is Colorado is proactively addressing these workforce implications of the clean energy transition.

Colorado's Transition Plan

In 2019, through legislation sponsored⁶ by the Colorado AFL-CIO, NRDC, and many of our BlueGreen Alliance partners, the state created the first Office of Just Transition in the nation. This office and its advisory committee, which is comprised of voices from across the state, were tasked with developing an action plan to address how Colorado can support workers and communities as our coal plants close. Colorado led the nation in developing the first statewide just transition plan and in requiring that utilities planning to retire coal plants generate workforce transition plans.

Pursuant to the legislation, the Office of Just Transition delivered a Just Transition Action Plan⁷ in December 2020 that targets existing resources and musters new ones in service of a just transition, recommends benefits for displaced coal workers—including wage benefits and education—and establishes a grant program for eligible entities in coal transition communities that seek to create a more diversified, equitable, and vibrant economic future.

The Action Plan's overarching goal is to avert another boom-bust cycle in Colorado by helping coal communities and workers transition to prosperous futures. To achieve this goal, it designates three categories of strategies: those related to communities, those related to workers, and those related to funding. Together with utilities, labor, environmental organizations, and the State, we are working hard to reduce the need for transition assistance, but we expect it will be a major challenge.

⁴ <https://www.nrdc.org/sites/default/files/committing-to-climate-action-gridlab-report.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/ariana-gonzalez/committing-equitable-climate-action-colorado>

⁶ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb19-1314>

⁷ <https://cdle.colorado.gov/colorado-just-transition-action-plan>

The Action Plan provides a framework outlining our desired outcomes and strategies to overcome transition challenges. Community-led solutions are critical to ensuring community resiliency. The plan recognizes that—to succeed in economic diversification, small business growth, tax revenue protection, and good jobs for workers—communities must design their own futures, with deliberation over an extended period.

Public and private investment can help communities build the systems to plan this transition. For example, some coal communities in Colorado simply cannot afford to devote city staff time to work on economic development. They do not have the capacity to apply for more than one federal grant at a time. They may also lack the resources to assist workers or employers to leverage existing local, state, federal, or non-profit programs that can give them what they need to move out of coal work, and into something else. Furthermore, they may recognize that a barrier to new business in the community is that their water system is inadequate – but they may not have anyone who can find funding to get it fixed. Investing in the capacity of coal communities is critical and will benefit local economies and small businesses.

Likewise, investing in community infrastructure will also contribute to community resiliency. Ensuring that local infrastructure—such as schools, hospitals, universities, and municipal buildings—is upgraded to meet higher efficiency standards will help grow and attract future investment.

NRDC and partners are working alongside the Colorado Governor and Treasurer’s offices to bring together the investment community as well as state and national foundations to develop a community engagement process to provide resources that allow local leaders to self-determine the best path for their communities after plant closure. Our efforts are directly supporting *Community Strategy 6* in the Just Transition Action Plan, entitled “*Attract grant and investments to power local economic growth.*” Namely, convening distinct groups of funders and investors to generate specific guidance and helping “Tier One” communities—meaning coal communities that are facing the earliest closures and at risk for near term disinvestment—participate in the investment discussion.

The strategy entails gauging and understanding the nature of investor interest, both directly and indirectly, to deploy investment capital in support of transitioning communities. We also hope to engage companies such as investor-owned utilities to invest in support of their stated climate-related commitments.

Clean Energy Future

Ensuring the clean energy future benefits small businesses and workers is not simple. Despite the potential difficulties, we must continue to engage with all stakeholders and think about non-traditional solutions. This is the entire purpose of our Colorado BlueGreen Alliance which, like chapters in other states, unites environment, labor, and community-focused partners. We bring together different perspectives and expertise to achieve mutually beneficial policy

solutions. Last year, our coalition invested a great deal of time in developing policy solutions to meet many of the requirements of the state's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Roadmap. Our biggest concerns were reducing emissions and ensuring good outcomes for workers and businesses.

Given failures by the previous Federal administration to support the growing clean energy economy, states were left to fend for themselves—creating a patchwork approach to the clean energy transition across the country. Therefore, new investment from the federal government is especially important. We need to ensure that any infrastructure package contains clean energy tax incentives, funding to develop new energy training pathways, funding to expand electric vehicle infrastructure, and standards and incentives for domestic manufacturing. These investments will create jobs and support communities facing an energy transition by providing good options for affected workers, while enhancing our domestic manufacturing supply chain

Investing in clean energy supports small businesses because it helps sustain local economies, and because energy efficiency upgrades save businesses money on their utility bills every month. By supporting incentives for businesses to upgrade to more efficient mechanical systems, you are putting money back into the pockets of small business owners.

As we make these investments, we cannot underestimate the importance of ensuring that the clean energy future results in high-quality jobs. We define high-quality jobs as those providing fair and equitable compensation, family-sustaining wages and benefits—such as paid family and sick leave, health care, and paid vacation—a career path, the right to organize, and a safe and healthy working environment that is free from hazards or retaliation, inclusive, and free of discrimination. With standards and incentives for domestic manufacturing, we can also ensure that investments in clean energy translate into quality, family-sustaining jobs, and a more robust domestic manufacturing supply chain.

Furthermore, we need to ensure that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities have access to these high-quality jobs. Ensuring equitable access to jobs can be achieved by requiring participating contractors to hire a certain percentage of their workforce from a particular demographic, creating training opportunities that aim to recruit people from marginalized communities, and include wrap-around support such as transportation or childcare support. We must also focus on building partnerships across the workforce ecosystem such as between utilities and community-based organizations serving marginalized communities.

Over the last decade, Colorado has invested state resources in creating accessible, equitable career pathways in many sectors. This year, Colorado passed legislation⁸ requiring the Colorado Workforce Development Council to create career pathways for students in the clean energy sector. The bill requires the state to work in collaboration with local work force boards, the state department of education, superintendents of local school districts, the state board for

⁸ <https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb21-1149>

community colleges and occupational education, and other postsecondary partners. Building these pathways is a great first step to ensure our students have a future in the vibrant and growing clean energy economy.

Colorado is also home to many union apprenticeship programs that are already training new and existing coal plant workers for jobs in the clean energy economy. Union apprenticeship programs are some of the best training opportunities for individuals interested in a vocational career pathway.

In 2019, Colorado further encouraged the development of clean energy apprenticeship programs in the Colorado Public Utilities Commission Reauthorization Act. As mentioned in the BlueGreen Alliance [2020 State Policy Toolkit](#),⁹ the Act:

Establishes the criteria by which the PUC reviews utility decisions to acquire new energy resources. Section 40-2-129 of that Act directs the PUC to evaluate proposals for new energy construction on best value’ employment metrics: The availability of training programs, including training through apprenticeship programs registered with the United States Department of Labor’s office of apprenticeship and training or by state apprenticeship councils recognized by that office. For the operations and maintenance of constructed or acquired clean energy projects, the bill also directs utilities to use qualified contractors if the employees have access to a registered apprenticeship program. (BGA 2020 State Policy Toolkit, Page 6)

According to the E2 (Environmental Entrepreneurs) [Clean Jobs America 2021](#)¹⁰ report, the clean energy sector employs more than three million individuals nationwide. In Colorado alone, more than 62,000 individuals work in clean energy, and the sector has grown five times faster than the fossil fuel industry. The report also highlights the fact that job growth is not just concentrated in major metropolitan areas, due in part to the highly localized nature of many clean energy jobs:

America’s rural nonmetropolitan statistical areas now employ nearly 400,000 workers, about 13 percent of clean energy’s entire workforce. But for many states, rural clean energy jobs account for significantly more than that. In 21 states, rural areas accounted for more than 25 percent of the state’s total clean energy employment and in four states the majority of clean energy jobs were in rural areas. (E2 Clean Jobs America 2021, page 18)

Clean energy jobs are also good jobs: median hourly wages are roughly 25 percent higher than the national median wage. They also tend to pay more than fossil fuel industry jobs. From the report:

⁹ https://www.bluegreenalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/StatePolicyToolkit_Report2020_vFINAL.pdf

¹⁰ <https://e2.org/reports/clean-jobs-america-2021/>

The median hourly wage for clean energy jobs was \$23.89 in 2019, according to an analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics data (BLS).¹¹ That was 25 percent higher than the nationwide median hourly wage of \$19.14. While wages in clean energy as a whole are lower than fossil fuels, some occupations pay just as well if not better than some fossil fuel jobs. For instance, wind turbine technicians in 2020 made about \$56,230 and solar installers made about \$46,470, according to BLS data.⁴ Oil and gas roustabouts made about \$39,420 while oil and gas derrick operators made about \$47,920. Looking at median hourly wages, wind energy workers earn the highest wages at \$25.95 per hour, compared with \$25.40 for grid modernization, \$24.82 for storage, \$24.48 for solar, and \$24.44 for energy efficiency. (E2 Clean Jobs America 2021, page 5)

It's important to note that most clean energy jobs—jobs that cannot be exported or outsourced to our foreign competitors—are at small businesses. More than 60 percent of the nation's clean energy workers are employed by companies that have fewer than 20 employees. About 90 percent work at companies with fewer than 100 employees. These small businesses—and these workers—are the backbone of America's economy. To ensure a prosperous future for many small businesses and local economies, we must support these companies and jobs and build pathways to create more of them.

The E2 report says it best: “The United States needs to get its economy humming again after COVID-19. It needs to address the growing economic and other costs of climate change. And as experience shows, there’s no better way to simultaneously create jobs, drive economic growth and address climate change than by investing in clean energy.” The report lists these specific steps the federal government can take to grow jobs and drive investments in states:

- *Transportation and Grid Modernization— Pass and fund legislation to create a national car-charging network, expand building efficiency improvements and modernize our electric grid.*
- *Tax Policy—Extend, expand and improve accessibility of federal tax incentives for energy efficiency, wind, solar, energy storage and zero-emission vehicles.*
- *Innovation—Make federal Investments in clean energy, vehicle and battery storage, energy efficiency, and regenerative and low-carbon agriculture.*
- *Workforce Training—Better fund existing programs and pass new programs to create new employment opportunities, improve equity and meet the workforce requirements of a better, cleaner economy.*
- *Clean Energy Finance—Facilitate and leverage privately financed clean energy projects and improve equity. (E2 Clean Jobs America 2021, page 27)*

¹¹<https://e2.org/reports/clean-jobs-better-jobs/>

Upgrading and expanding clean transportation infrastructure will also create good, family sustaining jobs and utilize Colorado's existing workforce. The EVRAZ steel plant in Pueblo, a Tier 1 coal transition community, is one of the only high-speed rail manufacturing centers in the West. This manufacturing center is directly supporting Colorado's plans to extend passenger rail between Cheyenne and Pueblo, which has been in the works for over 20 years. Now is the time to turn those plans into real infrastructure, creating union steelworker jobs, union construction jobs, while also equipping Colorado's workers and visitors with affordable, low-emission transportation options for generations. Just this year, Colorado passed important legislation to create the entity that will finally finance, build, and operate this new Front Range Rail we've been planning. The legislature also authorized \$453 million in bonds dedicated to multimodal transportation. However, to fully develop this project and get it done as quickly as possible, Colorado also needs federal investment.

In addition to the suggested investments mentioned above, the E2 report outlines the following workforce policies the Biden administration and Congress can pursue to expand clean energy jobs while also can making sure these jobs are better and available to even more workers:

- *Encourage or include requirements for project labor agreements (PLAs) on construction projects whenever possible.*
- *Require developers to abide by prevailing wage standards that set minimums for pay, health, and other benefits.*
- *Include local hire provisions for clean energy projects.*
- *Support education and job training for members of traditionally underserved communities.*
- *Enhance and enforce hiring and procurement policies that benefit low-income communities, people of color, and women.*
- *Ensure underserved communities that host clean energy facilities directly benefit with jobs and supplier opportunities.*
- *Ensure state housing finance agencies make ever-increasing commitments to efficiency and health improvements in Low-Income Housing Tax Credit-funded properties (E2 Clean Jobs America 2021, page 5)*

Just as in CO, we know that to make workforce training truly accessible, we need to make it financially accessible. That doesn't just mean affordable training but also a stipend. Many American families are living paycheck to paycheck. They can't afford to take unpaid leave or quit a job to take on training without financial support. Further, by providing incentives for communities in transition to own more clean energy assets (such as rooftop solar, EV's, energy efficiency upgrades, etc.), legislation can also help grow the local demand for jobs in these sectors. That in turn helps to ensure that investments in workforce training translate into real jobs in the local economy.

Conclusion

Investing in clean energy is a win-win for Colorado. We can reduce emissions that impact our climate and negatively affect our health while also creating good jobs. We need federal action to ensure investments benefit everyone, including people living on the margins, transition communities, rural residents, and tribes. The recent announcement of \$3 billion in funding for communities from the U.S. Economic Development Administration is a great start, but we can and must do more.¹²

In a recent letter to President Biden, Colorado's Governor Polis called on the administration to do three things to help workers and their communities through the transition to the clean energy economy: develop a national strategy for impacted fossil fuel workers, address local budget shortfalls due to loss of property taxes and other revenues, and finance long-term state and local economic development, resiliency, and diversification.

There is no better time to make these investments than now, as we slowly recover from the ongoing pandemic. Workers across the country have been out of work or in stagnant jobs for over a year. Lives have been uprooted, and families and small businesses are reliant upon necessary but temporary programs such as unemployment assistance and the Paycheck Protection Program.

We must act with urgency and deliberate focus to build back better and stronger. We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make life better for all Americans. If we fail to act, our communities and the small businesses that sustain them will suffer. This opportunity is here—right now. We must act now, we must be bold, and we must be intentional in our actions. Once again, thank you very much for this opportunity to testify.

¹² <https://eda.gov/news/press-releases/2021/07/22/american-rescue-plan-programs.htm>



Prepared Testimony and Statement

For the Record of

Tom Greer, Owner/Brewer

Hub City Brewing Co, LLC

US Congressional Committee on Small Business Subcommittee
on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce Development

Hearing Title:

Wealth for the Working Class:

" The Clean Energy Economy"

July 27, 2021

Via Zoom

Hub City Brewing Co. at the Rail Café
202 Desoto Ave. at the Rail Runner Station
Belen, New Mexico 87002

Good morning. My name is Tom Greer and I'm the owner of Hub City Brewing Co in the small rural town of Belen, NM 25 miles south of Albuquerque.

I grew up in East Lansing, MI and my family was typical in those times, 1950-1970, of the American Middle Class. Two kids, dad who had solid job and a mom who was highly underrated as a homemaker. I attended Michigan State University and began my career as a Professor at Lansing Community College as the Media Dept Curriculum Coordinator during the economic recession of 1974-1975. I worked directly with hundreds of out of work union blue collar auto workers, many who could only fall back on their veteran's education benefits and unemployment to keep their families afloat. I moved to NYC to be a Professor at Long Island University's Brooklyn Campus. My students were predominantly African American and I'll never forget them regularly walking me to the subway station after my night classes to make sure I got on the train safely.

I was recruited by J. Walter Thompson in 1980 at the time home shopping and the new satellite delivered TV industry was launched and became VP-Director of New Media Development where my job was to introduce the JWT clients to the new media opportunities. Since leaving JWT in 1982 I have created and run numerous television production and tourism related businesses in NY, CO, MT and currently NM.

We moved to Belen, NM in 2005. Climate, proximity to a large city, airport and Interstate Highway access and the Southern terminus of the new Rail Runner commuter train presented an exciting challenge and we thought we could make a difference.

The Rail Café opened in 2007. Then the housing collapse of 2008 hit Belen very hard. The café closed in 2008 but we kept the building. A booming microbrewery industry in NM lead to our opening Hub City Brewing Co in 2016. Then came the pandemic in early 2020. 15 months of struggles with being open, closed, carryout only, outdoor seating at 25% during the height of winter, on again-off again. Despite that, we have made it thru to today.

How does a small business like mine continue in operation and to thrive in this post-pandemic world? We are currently facing food and supply shortages, transportation issues, big spikes in the costs of supplies and services, difficulties in finding reliable employees. We need to make improvements and repairs and the

cost of building supply are at an all-time high. The last thing we need are more federal and state regulations, higher business taxes and higher energy costs.

Profit margins in the restaurant/brewery industry are slim. We already face increased insurance costs, an unpredictable labor market and a cumbersome regulatory environment.

We use a lot of electricity in our food and brewing processes and are blessed with an abundant and affordable clean energy source in Natural Gas here in NM. Natural gas plays a role in the “all of the above” smart plan along with wind and solar that I support here in NM.

We have plenty of natural gas and petroleum domestically, so we don’t want to be held hostage again by other producing countries, many that are not our friends. We have in the past seen what \$4.00 + gas prices does to our economy and particularly to our lower wage earners as a % of their income.

We need federal regulations that are predictable so we can plan long term. We can’t just change the rules in the middle of the game which seems to happen too often.

We can’t afford higher federal taxes rates on businesses, particularly small ones like mine that are already struggling to stay open and serve their communities. Small family-owned businesses are the backbone of both our rural and minority owned inner city businesses.

Re-funding the SBA “Restaurant Revitalization” Grant program is essential. Eliminate the “special class” designation that got priority funding as it hurt many communities it was intended to help. While I am an old white guy, likely last in line and not funded, I serve a predominantly blue collar, rural, Hispanic community.

We have made a difference in this small rural community. We have survived COVID, but it is sad that so many businesses around our state have not. Many have failed not because they didn’t have a good idea but rather the mandates of local, state and federal governments were simply impossible to overcome.

Thanks again for letting me share the Hub City Brewing Co story with you today.



Statement of

**BJ Johnson
Co-Founder and CEO
ClearFlame Engine Technologies**

**before the
House Committee on Small Business
Subcommittee on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce Development**

*ClearFlame Technologies submits this statement for the record concerning the hearing titled, **Wealth for the Working Class: The Clean Energy Economy, before the House Committee on Small Business, Subcommittee on Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Workforce Development on July 27th, 2021***

On behalf of ClearFlame Engine Technologies, we are honored and pleased to provide this statement to the House Committee on Small Business.

ClearFlame Brings Economic Development and Rapid, Cost-Effective Sustainability

A Black- and Women-founded small business since 2016, ClearFlame is dedicated to clearing a path to a decarbonized future for long-distance trucking, agricultural, and other hard-to-electrify sectors—bringing cost effective and rapid sustainability this decade.

We have located our company near Chicago in Geneva, Illinois, because we felt this was the optimal region to create the most impact, helping create jobs and economic development opportunities. As part of the first cohort of the acclaimed Chain Reaction Innovations program at Argonne National Laboratory, we saw the outstanding potential in building our business here in the Midwest—the nation’s epicenter for advanced manufacturing and agricultural.

We’re Not Just Protecting the Climate—ClearFlame Can Improve Air Quality and Create Economic Opportunities in Impacted Communities This Decade

ClearFlame’s mission is to accelerate a rapid and cost-effective path to a clean and equitable future. Our decarbonization solutions rapidly reduce the climate and environmental impacts of hard-to-electrify segments, while also reducing the diesel particulate pollution that disproportionately impacts low-income communities of color around the country.

From Sunset Park, Brooklyn to communities surrounding the Port of Los Angeles, from the communities surrounding the railyards of Kansas City to the farm communities of California’s Central Valley, low-income communities of color have lived with disproportionate levels of diesel pollution



for decades. This pollution has led to unacceptable levels of child asthma, life-long health impacts, and thousands of premature deaths nationwide, every year.

ClearFlame believes that today's children should not have to wait decades for cleaner air and a stable climate. By reducing soot, nitrogen oxides, and other toxic air pollutants - while also leveraging America's core competencies to mitigate greenhouse gases faster than any alternative - ClearFlame can solve problems from local to global scales.

We Offer Benefits for the Environment and Small Businesses

The ClearFlame technology maintains the power, reliability, durability, and other performance characteristics of traditional diesel engines that business owners rely on to get their jobs done. And, because our technology maintains 90% of traditional the diesel engine design, ClearFlame enables job continuity for the more than 281,000 people nationwide who currently work as diesel mechanics or other heavy-duty jobs.

This job continuity, as well as the direct and indirect benefits of lower total cost of ownership for small business owners who will benefit from our cost-effective technology, will provide significant economic benefits for small businesses across our nation.

ClearFlame Supports Technology-Neutral Performance Standards to Decarbonize our Economy

To achieve our nation's decarbonization goals, we support fuel-neutral, technology-neutral performance standards for engines and vehicles in all sectors. Ever since the first Clean Air Act was passed in 1970, this approach rewards small business innovators like ClearFlame, while accelerating rapid technology adoption, increasing consumer choice and lowering costs.

ClearFlame Engine Technologies is honored and pleased to provide this statement to the House Committee on Small Business. Thank you for the opportunity to share our goals for ClearFlame and small businesses across the country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "BJ Johnson".

BJ Johnson
CEO, ClearFlame Engine Technologies

